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OPERATION JOSEPH

THE Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth has been a victory demonstration—and rightly so as far as domestic policy is concerned. But on the food front, owing to factors almost entirely out of its control, the Government can claim no victory at all. Food dominates the domestic scene and famine haunts every international discussion. Famine is the grim reality which makes arguments about boundaries seem quibbles and the rivalries and prestige of statesmen sheer blasphemy.

The debate on food and agriculture, which is due next week, should give the Government a chance to explain where it stands in relation to the high objective set by Sir John Orr at the recent special meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organisation. When he was appointed director of F.A.O., Sir John was given a charter which precluded his organisation from dealing with the immediate crisis and limited it to fact finding and advice. As he said at the time, "the people of the world are asking for bread and we are giving them pamphlets." Since then, the urgency of this summer's crisis has made even individualist America realise that planning is as necessary to defeat famine as it was to defeat Hitler. Sir John seized his opportunity and boldly summoned a conference at Washington. He invited ten nations; 23 turned up. They arrived with set speeches, full of pious intentions, self-justifications and reservations. But the facts of the situation, as revealed by F.A.O., banished complacency. Beyond the immediate crisis of this summer lies the vista of five years of scarcity. There is a gap of no less than 10 million tons of cereals between the prospective yield of this year's harvest and world need. Ten million tons is the amount of cereals required by 500 million people in one year. That gap must be filled.

It can only be filled if now, before the harvest, plans are made for world rationing and for imposing economies on every producer nation. The Conference defined what those economies must be: wheat extraction rates of not less than 85 per cent., drastic curtailment of the supplies of animal foodstuffs and of the industrial uses of grain—including barley for beer. In order to put these economies into effect, the Combined Food Board, which only consisted of the U.S.A., Canada and Britain, has been wound up and twenty-two nations have been invited to join a new International Emergency Food Council, on which producer and consumer nations will have equal status. This Council will be equipped with an International Secretariat and intelligence service in order to ensure impartial assessment of the rival needs of the nations. The new Food Council has been able to constitute itself immediately without recourse to legislation by the member nations. In dealing with consumer nations, it will have the sanction that the allocation of supplies to each of them from the world food larder can be made dependent upon their fulfilment of economy targets. As for the producer nations, full publicity—no more under-the-counter trucking—should have some effect in bringing them into line. The life of this new Council is to be 18 months or for the duration of the crisis. Farmers will not respond to the demands which must be made on them, if they are faced with the prospect of a glut and a consequent collapse of food prices. The Conference, therefore, agreed that a plan must be worked out, in conjunction with the Economic and Social Council of Uno and the International Bank and the projected International Trade Organisation, for a world food control.

The permanent task of such a world food administration would be to husband the fat years against the lean and, to quote La Guardia, "to take human lives off the stock exchange tickers." "Operation Joseph" is a campaign which must be fought continuously. Unhappily for the Biblical parallel, the lean years in our time have preceded the fat ones. Sir John Orr will produce the plan of campaign at the September Conference of F.A.O. at Copenhagen. Mr. Bevin has spoken in general terms of his belief in world government. If he and the Labour Government sponsor the plan for "Operation Joseph" and take the lead in the creation of a permanent world food administration, they will have helped to construct the first ministry of the World State.

The Outlook for Labour

Food is only one of the world problems that may rudely shake the perhaps too satisfied mood described by our special correspondent at Bournemouth. To-day no Socialist government dare be only national in its outlook, for the fate of every nation is involved in that of its neighbours. The American loan will for a time ease the Government's financial difficulties and great strides have been made in building up the export trade without which we cannot import our necessary food or raw materials. But the conditions attached to the loan arouse grave misgivings. There is no evidence to support Mr. Churchill's contention that his party (which lays so much stress on Imperial Preference) would have driven a better bargain, but it is questionable whether it might not have been wiser to have no bargain at all. The disastrous impression has been created that we are now a satellite of American capitalism. The one certainty is that, loan or no loan, Britain cannot at the same time reconstruct at home, rebuild exports and continue to maintain vast military commitments abroad. A good start towards reduction has been made in Egypt and if we cannot yet speak with assurance about India that is not the fault of the three able and patient negotiators who represent the British Cabinet at Simla. The sooner British troops are out of Indonesia and Greece the better, but the only change that would really relieve our anxieties would be a general settlement with the U.S.S.R. and America, especially in Germany and the Middle East. The fate of the world, as Mr. Bevin repeated at Bournemouth, is at stake in the Paris conversations; the fact that the fate of the Labour Government depends on an agreement with Russia is also true, but comparatively trivial.

For this year the Conference was very naturally content to express its satisfaction with the unprecedented speed of Government legislation; to see the Bank of England and the mines at last nationalised; and to know that the great measures of Social Insurance, the Health and the New Town Bills are all on the way to the Statute Book. Housing still goes slowly, but there are signs that Mr. Bevan is surmounting his difficulties.

Altogether the Government's story justifies a Victory conference and if the wise are aware that the future will not be plain sailing, it is also true that the rocks are not yet clearly in sight.

The Danube Impasse

Pravda has responded to Mr. Bevin's suggestion that the Danube should be made the main focus of a system of European waterways under co-ordinating international control, with the assertion that the navigation of the Danube and all that depends on it is simply a matter for the riparian States through which the great river flows, and with an admonition to other countries to keep out. This means, of course, as the Soviet Union is now one of the riparian States concerned, that the countries which are to keep their hands off are those of the West, and that the international control of the Danube is to be regarded as a matter falling exclusively within the Soviet sphere of influence. An additional motive for this policy is the dislike aroused by certain American plans, which would involve making the Danube Valley the field of action of a number of big American-financed Corporations working under the general supervision of some sort of Control Commission set up for the whole length of the river, and operating with aid from the International Bank established as part of the Bretton Woods plan. The Americans, of course, want to use the Bank mainly, not for financing public enterprise, but for aiding and guaranteeing private commissions; and the Soviet Union is afraid that economic penetration of this type will carry with it political influence, and will destroy Soviet political ascendancy in the Danubian countries. The outcome, unhappily, will in all probability be that little will be done to develop the Danube either for navigation or as a centre of hydro-electric power for a long time to come. The Russians cannot yet spare the resources.

The Peasant Party Splits

As soon as M. Mikolajczyk had persuaded the General Council of the Polish Peasant Party to ask for a negative vote on the first question of the referendum to be held at the end of the month—which asks whether the voter desires to abolish the Senate—it was clear that he would split his party. The differences of opinion in the Council have driven out nearly a score of the party's most prominent leaders. Among those expelled on M. Mikolajczyk's initiative is M. Bertold, head of the Polish Agricultural State Bank and Minister of Agriculture until his place was taken by M. Mikolajczyk after the formation of the Provisional Government a year ago. The object of the Peasant Party in calling for a negative vote is not primarily to support the retention of the Senate—to whose abolition it would agree on certain conditions—nor yet to oppose the Coalition's policy on nationalisation, agrarian reform and the western frontiers, but to secure a demonstration of the party's strength in Poland. On the other hand, the Left parties hope for a double "Yes" as a vote of confidence. They can also point to the success of the recent negotiations in Moscow, whence the delegates returned with credits, a gold loan, food supplies and the cancellation of debts incurred in the equipment of Polish troops. The Polish press has not lost the chance to contrast this "open-handedness" with the long-standing dispute with Britain over Polish funds and gold reserves, the sudden withdrawal of the American loan, and the rumours that Britain and the U.S. are urging Molotov to revoke the Oder-Neisse boundary in favour of Germany. The expelled Peasant leaders are now denouncing those who are using the referendum "as a means of provoking civil war in the country". They urge all members of the Peasant party to repudiate Mikolajczyk's lead and to vote "Yes."

The King Who Came to Dinner

What does Umberto hope to gain by insisting upon the most strict interpretation of the referendum law? Every day that he remains in Italy increases the truculence of the defeated Monarchists. They could only revoke the popular verdict by civil war, as Umberto must now realise after the Naples riots, in which his supporters seem to have suffered serious casualties. The Monarchists have a most flimsy case. The Italian Cabinet and Court of Cassation may have been in a hurry to proclaim the Republic, but they were anxious to avoid the very delay and confusion which Umberto's procrastination has now produced. The electoral irregularities—which were less than might have been expected—were not, in any case, considerable enough to affect the result. Having agreed to accept the referendum, Umberto has no honourable alternative but to leave. He has already thrown away the opportunity of a graceful departure. This is an affair that the Italians must be left to settle for themselves, and the Allied Commission has rightly refrained from intervention. Italy has real and enormous problems to face, and cannot afford the continuous distraction of a constitutional issue which has been settled by free elections.

The Trial of Mihailovich

That General Mihailovich would be condemned as a war criminal, if he were captured by the Partisans, was a foregone conclusion. That his resistance to the Germans, which began at about the same time as that of the Partisans, soon became perfunctory; that he collaborated with Nedic, the Serb quisling; that he and his staff made what Mr. Churchill has called "accommodations with the Germans," and that his forces fought a murderous war against Tito's army, while it was fighting against the Germans—all these are familiar facts to anyone who has followed the Yugoslav story, and Mihailovich appears to be freely admitting them in the trial. Interesting revelations are also forthcoming about the continued British support of Mihailovich, even when he was fighting against our allies. Mihailovich even alleges that Col. Bailey, whom Mr. Bevin has thought a suitable member of the British Mission in Sofia, told him at the end of 1942 to "wipe out the Partisans." They were then, apart from the Russians, far the most effective force fighting for the Allies on the Continent.

U.S. Maritime Unions Stand Firm

Neither the shipowners nor the maritime unions have yielded to the persuasions of the Federal conciliators who are trying to avert the American shipping strike, due to start on June 15th. Both the Administration and the unions are making last-minute preparations. On President Truman's instructions, the Navy is calling up reserves and recruiting a force of strike-breakers who can be used if the discussions break down completely. This move has been sharply criticised by the unions, who say that Mr. Truman's announced intention of breaking the strike has stiffened the shipowners' determination to avoid any concessions and have appealed to the W.F.T.U. for support, already promised by Australian and New Zealand dockers. The seamen have suffered considerably from the big reductions in take-home pay which most American workers have had to accept since the end of the war. Overtime has fallen off and the wartime bonuses have come to an end. Their present demand is for graded increases, ranging from 22 cents an hour for the lowest ratings to 35 cents an hour for skilled men, a forty-hour week and an eight-hour day, whether at sea or in port. Unless the strike is postponed pending further discussions, or there is a last-minute compromise, the vast U.S. merchant fleet will be virtually tied up at the end of the week. If Mr. Truman—whose stock has already fallen 30 per cent. since January, according to opinion polls—is unable to find a way to prevent this major crisis, the United States may be hit nearly as badly as the millions who are now dependent upon American shipments for the bare necessities of life.

Uno and World Labour

The battle for fuller participation by the World Federation of Trade Unions in the work of Uno is not yet over. The Economic and Social Council has referred back the report of its special committee which has been examining the provisions for consultation with non-governmental organisations. This report made no distinction between the W.F.T.U. and other international organisations—such as the Co-operative Alliance and the Churches—and recommended that the W.F.T.U. and other bodies should be permitted to send representatives to meetings of the Economic and Social Council as "observers" without the right to speak. The report also suggested that if these bodies wished to make their views known to the Council they could submit written statements or request to be heard by appropriate sub-committees. The Committee made these decisions without consulting any trade union groups, although they made many requests to be heard. Last week the Council asked that this report should be reconsidered. Although Mr. Winant abandoned the stand that was taken by the U.S. at the London Assembly and asked for the Federation to be given further rights, other members of the Council, who have been backing the W.F.T.U.'s claim throughout, went beyond verbal support and blocked the endorsement of the report. Mr. Noel-Baker, for the British, maintained the demand for equality of treatment for other organisations with the W.F.T.U. If the committee presents a revised report which is acceptable to the friends of the W.F.T.U. it may, in turn, be blocked by the British and the Americans.

Co-operative Progress

The Annual Co-operative Congress, meeting at Blackpool, found itself face to face with a number of post-war problems. The Consumers' Co-operative movement, with its membership of nine millions, represents a high proportion of all the households in Great Britain; but it is already evident to Co-operative leaders that, if they are to hold and improve their position, they will need to adapt their trading methods. Many of the smaller Co-operative Societies are still little more than local grocery stores, and the movement's trade remains primarily a trade in groceries, although great progress has been made with its share of the distribution of milk and coal. This is not a satisfactory situation, because the modern housewife spends a much lower proportion of the family income on basic foodstuffs than her mother or grandmother did, and accordingly business tends to slip away from Co-operative to other agencies of distribution. This has led to many plans for the federation or amalgamation of local societies into larger units, for the setting-up of department stores to serve wide areas, for bazaar trading on the lines of Woolworth's and Marks and Spencer, and for the establishment of new departments and branches of production. In addition, a number of Societies have been buying up not only private shops, including pharmacies, but also hotels, restaurants, theatres and cinemas, and there have been many proposals for spending the very large reserve of capital which the movement has been able to accumulate. There is also active interest in the establishment of closer trading, as well as merely fraternal relations, with the renascent Co-operative movement in Europe, and on the political side there is the recent agreement between the Labour and Co-operative Parties, and the new problems of co-operative development in relation to the socialisation policies of this and future Labour Governments. Consequently the Congress had a full agenda, though many of the more difficult issues were more talked about by delegates outside the hall than thrashed out in formal debate.

MORALS AND POLITICS

We have just been celebrating a Victory over the Devil. I use the word in the most exact sense it can have, since Nazism was the most serious effort known in history to found society on Satanism. Hitler did not believe in peace, friendship and truth, and, sometimes backsliding, like the rest of us, into strife, enmity and lying. He was a loyal servant of the Devil, preferring war to peace, falsehood to truth and racial domination to human brotherhood. In that faith he made war, tortured political opponents, murdered six million Jews and tried in vain to turn the Slavs into slaves. Together the Allies have defeated this enemy in battle, and we rightly celebrate the occasion.

If our jollifications are haunted and even half-hearted it is not only because the future is dubious and our rations short. It is also because we are conscious of having ourselves travelled a long way on the road to Satanism to defeat our enemy. Having begun by declaring that we should never bomb civilians (at a time when we had very few aeroplanes) we ended by destroying urban life in Germany and atomising Hiroshima and Nagasaki. War is a moral holiday when, with a good conscience, we do all the things we have learnt at our mother's knee to regard as sinful. For a time it is a patriotic duty to tell lies and to regard killing as no murder. That is one of the reasons why war is periodically popular; it is also one of the reasons why interest in religion and ethics revives when conscience comes into its own, not long after victory.

The moral issues of our day are necessarily concerned with politics, and the most active of current ethical controversy is between Leninists and those who, in one form or another, try to make a stand for the "permanent values" of our civilisation. This second school, which we may call for convenience the Moralists, demands that we turn from our wickedness, repent and cleave to our great inheritance of liberty, tolerance and respect for human personality. Logically, those who demand a return to Christianity and absolute values should be absolute pacifists. But having been parties to a war which was so decisive a rejection of the Sermon on the Mount, most of them are content to attack the immorality of others and, for themselves, to fall back upon a British compromise. The Leninists, on the other hand, while not repudiating the values of Western Civilisation, argue that we are all involved in a vast historical process which must end in the victory of proletarian Socialism; and that the ideas of right and wrong must be adjusted to the changing conditions of this struggle. Since only the Communist Party correctly interprets this social process, right and wrong are old-fashioned words for obedience or disobedience to the party line. That, again, is the logical and blunt conclusion of the argument, but since Communists in this country have a background of British Puritanism and an instinctive distrust of infallibility, they usually avoid saying that right and wrong cease for them to exist, and continue to use the language of traditional morality.

The Leninist view of ethics was the subject of a long article by Professor J. D. Bernal in the first issue of the *Modern Quarterly*, and a tart comment on this article appeared in the May number of *Polemic*, a journal which represents the views of such able Moralists as George Orwell, Arthur Koestler and Humphrey Slater. The controversy is welcome, for it discusses real problems.

Professor Bernal is an outstanding scientist, but no more a philosopher than I am myself. In dealing with political science he uses language with a lack of precision which he would not for a moment tolerate in any field in which he is a specialist. *Polemic* is, however, obviously unfair. It quotes a passage, for instance, in which Bernal says that liberalism is often expressed in such a debased form that "honest but ignorant minds have preferred even the bestialities of Fascism to its unreal and useless tenets," and regards this as a declaration that Bernal himself thinks Fascism preferable to liberalism! But *Polemic* makes a palpable hit when it attacks Bernal's cloudy language. I should not have thought that any serious writer, least of all a Marxist, would have said that "we are at the beginning of a new era in which the people, at last firmly in power, can plan and act." Similarly to say that "the majority of the people can be trusted: no superior or élite group can be" leaves one asking who the people are, for what they can be trusted, and why a member of an élite group which asks for implicit trust should lapse into the mystic demagogy of a sentimental nineneenth-century politician. In another passage quoted by *Polemic*, Professor Bernal writes:—

> A radical change in morality is in any case required by the new social relations which men are already entering into in an organised and planned society. The relative importance of different virtues are bound to be affected. Old virtues may even appear as vices and new virtues instituted. Many of the basic virtues—truthfulness and good fellowship—are, of course, as old as humanity and need no changing, but *those based on excessive concern with individual rectitude need reorienting in the direction of social responsibility.*

Taking up this last (italicised) passage, *Polemic* suggests that this is no more than an elaborate and evasive way of saying that "party loyalty means doing dirt on your own conscience."

Here the liberal and the Leninist meet in headlong collision. Bernal is saying that the interest of the group comes first, and that if one's private judgment conflicts with those interests then one must learn to subordinate his inward misgivings to the authoritative interpretation of group interest. This is the morality of the disciplined soldier in all countries, and it is also that of dutiful members of the Catholic Church or the Communist Party. Once this ethic is accepted and the implication that the Papal or the Party line is infallible ceases to be in dispute, the loyal adherent is no longer doing "dirt on his own conscience" when he stifles his misgivings; he is acting morally in obeying. Since, however, the whole basis of ethics in the Christian-Greco-Roman civilisation, of which we are a part, is the duty of the individual to obey his conscience, absolute obedience to any Church, Party or State does, in fact, mean to inheritors of our tradition, "doing dirt on one's own conscience." Indeed, conscience has no meaning unrelated to individual judgment.

Here *Polemic* has been content with a quip where it might have developed a serious argument. But in saying that the passage about changing vices and virtues, quoted above from Bernal, means that "we must alter our conception of right and wrong from year to year and, if necessary, from minute to minute," and justifying this by listing some of the somersaults of Moscow policy in recent years, *Polemic* does much less than justice to Bernal's argument. In point of fact, while some basic moral conceptions—truthfulness and good-fellowship, for instance—are permanent in the sense that no human society can hold together unless they are recognised, Bernal is right in saying that lesser virtues change with changing conditions. In the nineteenth century, for instance, the virtues of industry and thrift were generally regarded as of the utmost importance. But if, in fact, we are on the threshold of an age of plenty the thrifty man will be a miser and to be industrious for more than the requisite number of hours per day will be merely eccentric. More important, in a Socialist society, to have accumulated personal wealth, which was regarded by Victorians as the just reward of enterprise and abstinence, will have become a proof of a vicious life on the black market. One of the indisputable achievements of the Soviet Union is to have created a society in which to live on the exploitation of the labour of others is generally regarded as the meanest form of theft.

Those who have not mastered enough history—let alone Marxism—to know that virtues and vices are always changing with historical evolution, will not understand any problem of current ethics or politics. Marx stands in the history of political thought much as Darwin does in the field of biology. To-day we are not "Darwinians" or "anti-Darwinians"; we recognise Darwin as the man who formulated a much over-simplified theory of the now accepted fact of evolution, to which all subsequent biological thinking has been related. To ask me whether I am a Marxist or not is as meaningless as to ask me if I am a Darwinian. If I have not absorbed the basic truth of Marxism I can make no sensible comment on the struggle that now convulses society. But if I regard Marx (whose theories have proved about as true or false as Darwin's) as infallible or followed blindly the leadership of his unquestioning disciples, in spite of their very obvious errors, I should be just as silly as if I denied that any progress has been made in evolutionary theory since men first heard of "the survival of the fittest."

The strangest error common amongst Leninists is to assume that because they are in possession of an essential instrument of social analysis, the only thing of importance is to win the class war. *How* the class war is won is obviously also of the utmost importance, and problems of individual rectitude (that is, good behaviour) are equally important at all stages in the struggle and will remain just as important in a Socialist State. Even if it is true—and it is by no means certain—that a social analysis, conditioned by Marx's position in nineteenth-century Capitalist society, leads to the assurance that some day we shall get world Socialism, it remains true that world Socialism can come in innumerable forms, and that it could be good or bad. It would certainly be good in that it would end the particular evils of Capitalist society. But a world society which no longer suffers from Capitalist exploitation or international war might or might not foster truthfulness, friendliness and respect for human personality. Whether they would triumph or be trodden underfoot as ruthlessly as they were in tyrannies that flourished before the age of Capitalism, is still a question whose answer depends on human will. A lot of nonsense is talked about "the end justifying the means." The end will always justify the means if the end is good and the means adapted to promote it. The trouble is that those who preach this doctrine often forget the end for which they are working. The reason for desiring Socialism, as Marx well understood, was that it would be an era of true democracy in which, class domination abolished, the liberal ideas of liberty, equality and human brotherhood would be realised. Lenin also desired these goods, but in building the machinery of Socialist victory, he and his followers often forgot why Socialism is desirable. Here, surely, is the simplest of confusions. To win power for the Communist Party is not at all certainly the same thing as to promote the brotherhood of man or the egalitarian community. If, in the course of the fight, the means used have diverted the ends originally sought, the victory of Communism might prove to be one that horrified loyal Socialists, including the followers of Marx. In that case the battle for freedom, which was the original inspiration of Marx, would merely have to be begun again on a new basis.

The Western Socialist, therefore, will accept, in broad outlines, the Marxist analysis of society, including the doctrine that Socialism must come in different ways in different countries. He is confronted with the fact of a class-struggle (*Klassen-Kampf* not *Klassen-Krieg*), and he must fight for Socialism, not by subordinating private judgment to the very fallible decrees of Moscow, but by means that are in themselves good and which will make our Socialist victory worth while when we have won it.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE ARTS AND THE PEOPLE

On a wet Whit-Monday, a great many people must have asked one another the question, "Where shall we go?" One very frequent answer must have been, "To the pictures"; and it is strange to reflect that, of the many thousands who made it, only a tiny fraction will have had any appreciation of its double meaning. To how many of us, when we are asked to go to the pictures, does it ever occur that there is more than one kind of pictures that a man or woman can visit on a wet day, or that the other kind of pictures—the kind that lives in galleries and not in picture-theatres—represents a vision of the real world from which the kind we mostly visit is an escape?

How many people, if it had entered their heads to visit a picture-gallery instead of a picture-theatre, would have been able to do so at all easily, at all events with any prospect of seeing something new and good? London is well equipped with public galleries, besides being the almost exclusive home of the art dealers and their private exhibitions. A few provincial towns have good galleries; but most of the provincial galleries, even if they contain some good stuff, are largely filled with chance examples of mediocrity, which are on exhibition not because anyone wants to see them but because someone left them in his will. The good things in most of the provincial galleries are not only few, they are also haphazard, and have no quality as collections. And in most of the smaller towns, as well as in some of the larger, and, of course, all over the countryside, there is scarcely a picture to be seen. Even the provincial picture-lover can usually get no thrill of new experience from a visit to his local gallery, if there is one, unless it happens to be running a good loan exhibition. He has tasted all its attractions after at most a few visits: he may go back afterwards, but there are no inexhaustible riches to give him ever new experiences of appreciation and understanding. The provincial collection, even if it is good, speedily becomes a dead thing, and passes on no living inspiration. If, as is so often the case, it is bad, it may do much positive harm, by inducing in the minds of most of its visitors a belief, not easy to eradicate, that art is dull and dead.

All this is commonplace; and sporadic attempts are made from time to time to mend the matter. The British Institute of Adult Education, followed on a larger scale by C.E.M.A., has done a great deal by organising travelling exhibitions; the Victoria and Albert and some other national collections have loan departments; and directors of provincial galleries and museums have become much more active than they were in arranging loan exhibitions, within the narrow limits of their power and of their resources of space and money. There is a public that responds to these endeavours; but it is not large, and there are powerful obstacles in the way of its growth. The B.B.C. has done a great deal to revive popular standards of musical appreciation because every day it can play good music well to all who care to listen; but nobody can hold good pictures up daily for all the world to see.

Good work in the visual arts is being done in many schools, especially in infant and junior schools and in some senior schools, where the "subject" is not crowded out by examination syllabuses, as it is apt to be in schools of other types, and indeed need not be taught as a "subject" at all, but can be made an integral part of other subjects. That, of course, except for the professional student, is what it should be. But teachers cannot teach what they do not know or feel; and art education in many schools founders on that rock. As for the local Art Schools, in spite of admitted improvements in recent years, everyone agrees that they are utterly unsatisfactory. Indeed, they cannot be anything else, when their main occupation is to produce industrial designers and draughtsmen, and most industries do not want designers who will make an attempt to lead the public taste instead of copying what can be most easily fitted in with the plans of the production departments. Here again, there has been some improvement, of which the work of the Cotton Board, with its Design, Style and Colour Centre at Manchester, is a notable example. Nor must it be forgotten that "utility" did in some things, notably furniture, give a much needed opportunity for demonstration of the possibilities of simple, good design. These, however, are still highly exceptional cases: in general, public taste in everyday objects is poor, or even bad, because people have been given no chance of making it better; industrial supply is bad artistically because most manufacturers reflect the public taste, and could not tell a good designer from a bad one if they tried, or bring themselves to think of him as worth good money if they found him; art education in the ordinary schools is poor, because most teachers are not expected to have any standards of appreciation or knowledge beyond those of the general public; and specialised art teaching is bad, because it has to turn out designers who are neither required nor encouraged to do good work.

If we really believe, as many of us are fond of saying, that art, including visual art, is an important expression of the spirit of a community and that the artist's vision of the world is as true and valuable a vision as that of the scientist, the engineer, or the sociologist, these conditions are intolerable. The Arts Enquiry, set up some years ago under the auspices of the Dartington Trustees, tries in its recently published Report on the Visual Arts,* which is to be followed by further reports on Music, Drama, and the Factual Film, to tell us some things that can be done at once. Rightly, it lays considerable stress on the travelling exhibition, accompanied by the travelling lecturer, on the development of art teaching in the ordinary schools, not only for juniors but right up the scale, on the multiplication of good, cheap reproductions of many sorts and kinds, and, last but not least, on the better and more assured payment of artists and designers and on the less parsimonious and more imaginative handling of art education in the provincial Schools of Art and Design.

The first artistic need of every substantial centre of population is not for a permanent collection of art objects—which is bound to be in most instances made up mainly of the second-rate—but for a good, friendly, empty building in which loan collections and exhibitions, particular and not general in range, can be shown well, and in addition refreshments can be got, and lunch-time and other concerts and lectures arranged. This implies, of course, a national agency (or several agencies) to supply a choice of exhibitions and to cover the expenses of transport and insurance, which are prohibitive except for large centres whenever the exhibits are fragile or of high value. It implies something on quite a different scale from the existing organisation devised from C.E.M.A. or from the Loan Department of the "Vic and Bert." Indeed, it implies a substantial central department, with funds to buy and hire objects of art, and with a considerable trained staff capable of designing exhibitions of many kinds and of talking simply and sensibly about them to audiences entirely unversed in the art of artistic appreciation.

The next step is to do much the same thing for the schools, both by equipping them as a matter of course with good exhibiition halls, where both artistic and other exhibitions can be regularly displayed, and by taking seriously in hand the training of teachers in the *lay* appreciation of the arts, in such a way that they can pass on at least an inkling of what art means. And the next step after that is to tackle on a really large scale the problem of industrial design—as we shall be forced to do by the requirements of the export trade, for even if most of our manufacturers and most of their home customers do not know the difference between good and bad design, quite a number of foreign buyers do.

But, it may be said, all these proposals omit the most essential person of all, the artist. So they do, except in the matter of training. The only way, however, of bringing the artist into close touch with the people, and thus enabling him to work fruitfully for an age of democracy, is to give him a democratic audience. The artist has been for a long time past largely a hanger-on of plutocracy, not by his own fault, but because there was only one other thing for him to be—a pauper, regarded by his friends as a failure, and apt to react with an artistic snobbery which forbade him to make any concession to uneducated public taste. If we want an art that will express the values of our democratic society, we must provide the artist with a growing audience whose judgment he does not despise.

* The Visual Arts: A Report by the Arts Enquiry. *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

A LONDON DIARY

The fireworks were terrific, and seeing the Thames on fire was the sight of a life-time. The crowd vastly enjoyed it, and Westminster will not be passable at night as long as the floodlit fairy-land continues. The exquisite coloured fountains of St. James' Park should be a permanent national institution. The truth is that the British love *fiestas* as much as any people, in spite of their reputation for phlegm, and they get too few of them. Fireworks should be repeated more often. If we think of the number of people who enjoyed them, each one of whom would have happily paid 6d., the spectacle is remarkably cheap. They enjoyed the procession too, particularly cheering the miners and civilian war workers, who proved almost as popular as the King and Queen and Monty. When the rain poured down the draggled merry-makers ate their sodden sandwiches, huddled in doorways and under arches. They grumbled surprisingly little; they had a grand outing which had nothing much to do with Victory; many of those who enjoyed it had cursed the whole idea before they came. As a wise child unanswerably put it, "You wouldn't have missed it for worlds, if you'd seen it."

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I can imagine the flutter among the pro-Arabs in the Colonial Office and in Cairo when they heard the news of the Grand Mufti's escape. He had been strongly advised by his influential British friends to remain in France, because, if he set foot on British territory, we would have to arrest him and put him on trial. This might endanger the plan for giving Palestine "independence" in the near future which has been ventilated recently in the *Observer* and *Daily Telegraph*. In an independent Palestine, the Mufti would be almost automatically selected as the Prime Minister; and his friends are therefore desperately anxious to keep him out of harm's way until memories of his wartime record are dulled. Those who know him tell me that he has no less charm and a great deal more vigour than his brother, Jemal Husseini who now heads the Arab Higher Committee. After the collapse of the Arab revolt and the arrest of the leaders, he escaped to Syria. Then in 1941, he took a leading part in the revolt of Rashid Ali in Iraq. When that failed, he made his way to Germany where he organised a Moslem-Bosnian S.S. and broadcast for the Germans to the Moslem world. If these had been his only activities, he might have got away with it. But captured German documents, some of which have been published in the American press, depict him as one of Hitler's personal consultants on the best methods of liquidating Jews. When the war was over and the Arab Higher Committee was reconstituted in Jerusalem instead of disowning the Mufti, Jemal officially testified on its behalf to the Anglo-American Committee that only the Mufti could speak

adequately for the Arabs of Palestine, and that he had served his country faithfully by escaping to Germany and ensuring good terms if Hitler were victorious. I don't suppose that the fellahin in the village know anything about his war record. They admire him simply for being anti-British. But it is interesting that the Arab political leaders, who know every detail, strongly defend his attitude, and that there are still British officials who are intriguing for a solution of the Palestine problem which would make him the most powerful man in an Arab state. No wonder that Harold Laski this week at Bournemouth spoke so strongly against the policy of appeasing a corrupt Arab oligarchy.

* * *

The United States need a Charles Dickens. Without some such genius to describe its appalling poverty in the midst of prodigious luxury, its neglect of the destitute, the mentally deranged, the abnormal and, the criminal offender, it is not certain that public opinion can be sufficiently aroused to carry out the essential minimum of humane reforms which, in theory, are universally accepted in America as in other civilised countries. Every now and then a book awakens the public's conscience about, say, the treatment of negroes in the South, but there is no central power to stop lynching in Arkansas or Alabama. Every now and then a Government report does a thorough job. Some people may remember the horrors revealed by the Wickersham Committee on penal institutions, and the case in which a cell full of prisoners were roasted to death by their guards. One of the best of such exposures has now appeared in the May 6th issue of *Life*. It is entitled "Bedlam 1946," and describes in much detail the way in which the taxpayer's money is saved in some American States by confining mental cases in institutions, which are policed by warders who are criminals or sadists, and unequipped for serious medical treatment. No curative methods appear even to be tried, and many patients die from starvation and beating. The evidence seems conclusive. It comes partly from admissions by the State authorities themselves, revelations of various enquiries when patients have been beaten to death, and from the detailed accounts given by conscientious objectors who volunteered during the war for work in mental hospitals. In Cleveland, Ohio, where *Life's* terrifying photographs were taken, exposure of the scandal has at last resulted in drastic reforms. On a much smaller scale we owe improvements in prison conditions in England to C.O.s who were imprisoned in this country during the last war. But these temporary warders, most of them religious men of good character, have succeeded, in spite of the obstruction and opposition, in getting their case over. What everyone would want to know who has seen the photographs and read the article in *Life* is whether the result is going to be that all similar institutions are brought up to the level of the one pioneer establishments that can also be found in America.

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At the opening of the Germany Under Control Exhibition in Oxford Street, John Hynd, who as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, is Minister responsible for Germany, Air Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas and General Sir Brian Robertson all argued that the future of the British Zone depended on feeding the Germans. At the exhibition itself the centre of interest was not the pictures of bomb destruction, demoralised Germans, or even the reconstruction work of the British. The principal crowd gathered round two small cases showing the contrast between the weekly rations of German and British citizens. If the millions who now read the less scrupulous papers on this subject could see these exhibits, we should hear less nonsense talked. Presiding over them was a young English officer. I asked him what he suggested we should do by way of remedy. He said that we had to move some of the rations from the British show-case into that of the Germans. Just like that. That was the point of the exhibition. So the wheel comes full circle. Having indoctrinated the British population with Vansittartite nonsense and transferred the ideas of Poona to the British Zone, British soldiers are now doing their best to persuade the public to agree to further food cuts so that the Germans may live. The public will not easily take it. John Strachey will have to do some very straight talking indeed to the country and explain that this catastrophic situation is not a question of Government policy but of sheer world shortage aggravated by America's failure to send her promised quota. Some, but only some, of the public will listen to the moral appeal of Victor Gollancz's new book *Our Threatened Values* (Gollancz, 5s.), but they may see the force of the letter in *The Times* which Mr. Gollancz quotes, in which Sir Arthur Salter pointed out that to cut our ration by 100 calories (which would leave it at 2,650 calories or more) will be enough to make the difference between maintaining life at a very low standard in Germany and facing a prospect of sheer starvation and pestilence.

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Nothing has given me so much the feeling that we are returning to normal conditions as the reopening of the London School of Economics, just round the corner from this office. It was Graham Wallas, then Professor of Political Science, who twenty-five years ago painted its merits to me in comparison with Cambridge, where I at that time hoped to remain as a don. "Don't you feel," he said, "that it is much more alive and in touch with real issues than Cambridge?" Certainly it has always been very much alive since its foundation by the Webbs just fifty years ago. There was almost no economic teaching in London University when it started, and the Webbs had the vision to see that a legacy of a few thousand pounds could be enough to lay a small foundation stone on which a great structure could in time be erected. It began at No. 10 Adelphi Terrace, on the ground floor of Mrs. Bernard Shaw's flat. To-day it is a great international institution. It was also characteristic of Sidney Webb to see that the way to succeed was not to make what would be regarded as a crank institution for his own unorthodox ideas of economics, but to have a staff of wideawake economists of various ways of thinking who would give the place a sound academic status. Webb always believed, and rightly, that if people seriously studied economics many of them would become Socialists, and so it has proved. The heads of the Economic Department, from Professor Cannan downwards, have been mainly anti-Socialists, but the result has been that their most promising students have often been the better Socialists because they understood the capitalist arguments. Two of the principal speakers at the celebration dinner last week were the present Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, both of whom have been teachers at L.S.E., and it would be easy to provide a long list of leading Socialists who would say that they owed their training to the School. This is what people who attack the L.S.E. as a hotbed of Socialism have never understood. If its students often turn out to be Socialists that is because capitalist economics are so well taught there.

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"Britain," writes a North Country correspondent, "has gone 'half-dry' with remarkably little display of public feeling. Apart from the brief token strikes by Middlesbrough dockers because there was no beer available during dinner hour, there has been no demonstration, but there is certainly a good deal of smouldering discontent. Cuts in beer supplies in Northern industrial districts have been fierce. For instance, the landlord of one big waterfront hotel on Merseyside had his weekly allocation cut from 50 barrels to 32. Rural districts have been no luckier. There is a Yorkshire dales village, popular with West Riding townspeople, where the five inns, all tied to the same brewery, received only ten barrels among them to last a fortnight, including the Victory and Whit Holiday week-end. The reactions of thirsty customers seem to be conditioned by their politics. Tories curse the Labour Government and repeat scurrilous rhymes about the British working man being deprived of his beer to feed Nazi murderers. Left wing drinkers suspect a deep-laid plot by the breweries to cut supplies more than necessary 'in order to make the Labour Government unpopular.'"

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Leslie Harrison.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Lavender said he was struck behind the ear by one of the accused as he was walking home in Tottenham Court-road. When he remonstrated they apologised and said they had mistaken him for a plain-clothes policeman—*Evening Standard.*

Swan which swallowed a watch belonging to an artist painting in a boat on Grasmere Lake, is being watched by the police.—*Daily Herald.*

Male Student Nurses required, age 20–25. Minimum height, 5ft. 8in. Preference will be given to ex-Forces bandsmen playing double bass, trumpet, clarinet or saxophone.—Advt. in *Birmingham Mail.*

Among the lingerie of the type not seen in every underwear department are suspender belt and brassiere sets, at 5 gns., made of pure silk, figured in one case with hunting scenes, in another with characters from Lambeth Walk.—*The Recorder.*

Undertakers in Devon and Cornwall want gravediggers to wear blue uniform with brass buttons, to make funerals "more dignified."—*Daily Mail.*

THE NEW SPOKESMAN

[At the Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth, Mr. Herbert Morrison forecast the appearance of an official Socialist weekly.]

A Labour Weekly is our need
  On which we can rely,
Which heads of State will regulate
  And Transport House supply.
Official hand-outs must succeed
  Against outside competitors,
Which now abound in views unsound
  Of intellectual editors.

What so-called Labour magazine
  Our transport worker reaches,
With ample "quotes" instead of notes
  On Ministerial speeches?
Some lukewarm Left Reviews are seen,
  How highbrow and how arty!
For which we urge a proper purge
  And an editorial party.

Though thousands study each week end
  Their comments analytic
And may be led by the crypto-Red
  And not-so-crypto Critic,
This giddy and subversive trend
  We will not suffer meekly,
For Labour news, not Left-wing views
  Should fill a Labour Weekly.

The socialistic weekly press
  Proclaims a Labour angle,
But still must learn the way to turn
  The propaganda mangle,
And Labour Unions must confess
  Full unity imperilled
Till we define the Party Line
  In a week-end *Daily Herald.*

SAGITTARIUS

VICTORY CONFERENCE

THE last time most of us were here was at Whitsuntide 1940. While across the Channel the great collapse began and while in London Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee discussed the Coalition Government, the Party Conference met in cloudless summer weather. It was a Bournemouth still untouched by the ravages of war. In the month when Britain came nearest to defeat, queues scarcely existed; rationing was almost unnoticeable, and, incredible to remember, clothes were not rationed at all. Hardly a hotel was requisitioned. Not a bomb had fallen. Beer was still beer and whisky was obtainable. In retrospect May 1940 seems like a golden age of prosperity and comfort. This week, more than a year after victory, Bournemouth is a sombre, unpainted town of long, quiet queues and empty counters. The Victory Conference takes place under the shadow of a food shortage which, for the ordinary public, makes nationalisation plans seem irrelevant compared with the nasty fact that 40,000 tons of potatoes had to be sent to Germany and now there are none in the shops.

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The delegates—a record crowd—do not seem unduly perturbed by the ominous grumble of the non-political voter. They know that, by the time he has to use his vote again, rationing and queues will be ancient history and Labour will be judged on something more enduring—its social programme. Right from the business-like start, it was clear that this was going to be a good-tempered Conference which admits reluctantly—for since 1931 we have always been reluctant to give credit to our leaders—that *Let Us Face the Future* will be on the Statute Book long before the five-year period is over. There is an atmosphere of slightly incredulous satisfaction at the speed of the Cabinet's streamlined legislation. The debate, if you can call it a debate, on National Insurance was typical. "The shortest fourth reading I have ever attended," said a tired Member of Parliament in the dress circle where he and his colleagues are sitting, line upon line of them, somnolent in their padded arm-chairs, like convicts released for a few days from the treadmill of the division lobbies. Ten minutes after the debate started, Jim Griffiths replied with a masterly exposition which thoroughly earned him his ovation. This set the pattern for the other debates on domestic policy. For the Bank of England, the mines and National Health, the process of legislation is running so smoothly and with such negligible opposition that the prognostications of those Left-wingers who used regularly to prove that the inherent contradictions of capitalist society would arm the City of London with machine-guns if ever a Labour Government carried out a Labour policy look rather silly. Strange to remember that during the 1930's reformism was a philosophy rejected by every Left-winger worth the name, and that includes nearly everyone who got the cheers at the Annual Conference. Now reformism numbers among its chief executants in office all the brilliant prophets of the inevitability of violence, Aneurin Bevan, Stafford Cripps, Ellen Wilkinson, Emanuel Shinwell and John Strachey.

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Conference memory is longer than might be imagined. Undoubtedly the recollection of misplaced cheers at earlier conferences is one of the reasons for the extraordinary strength displayed by the Right-wing leaders this year. Clem Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Hugh Dalton, Herbert Morrison and Arthur Greenwood were the Big Five who never deviated from the strait and narrow way of constitutional gradualism in the years when even the Fabian Society began to talk more of proletarian Unity than of gas and water. This week the Big Five have their reward. The bulk of the Party and Trade Union delegates, who stood by them even when they had no argument for doing so, because they instinctively disliked and distrusted their critics, now feel that their loyalty has been justified. The Left-wingers also receive their applause because Conference likes brilliance and their arguments for reformism are as brilliant as their attacks on it used to be. Success, has united old enemies and annulled contradictions.

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This, no doubt, is the main reason for the truly amazing swing against Communist affiliation. The Unity campaign was always an unconscious and sometimes a deliberate expression of lack of confidence in the Party's fitness for power. Seeking outside assistance to Left and Right, its protagonists implicitly impugned the ability of their own leadership. But Dr. Dalton's Practical Socialism has proved the right medicine after all. Without the assistance of the Communist spearhead, Labour is advancing very nicely; despite the absence from the Cabinet of Pollitt, Dutt and Hutt, Clem Attlee has not gone the way of Ramsay. Unity now looks like a stunt to advertise a self-important and—in Britain at least—a rather silly political sect. The recognition that, in order to be a Socialist Government, Labour does not need the Communists, has probably been far more important in causing the swing than any foreign political issues. In so far as these latter enter in, they are combined with a growing identification of Socialism and patriotism. This Conference has lost its inferiority complex and is no longer so inclined to believe that Russia is the only Workers' State. To modify Lenin's words, it regards the present Cabinet as the Executive Committee of the working-class. A few years ago Jimmy Walker was almost howled down because he dared to assert from the chair that there was freedom underneath the Union Jack. Now delegates are beginning to believe that the Bevin type of Social-Democracy, in spite of all its drawbacks, is the best form of government for working people and, in their present mood of triumph they are perhaps forgetting that a stage may come when the capitalist opposition is far less easy to handle. Relations with Russia have become a foreign issue, not, as they used to be, an internal Party problem. Hence the anti-Communist swing.

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Laski's remarkable address as chairman provided the directive for the opposition to the platform and assured him re-election to the Executive, despite his unpopularity with some of his Cabinet colleagues. The floor likes to feel that it is more advanced than the platform. No one, if I may borrow Laski's style for a moment, has a better *expertise* in articulating that desire in labyrinthine sentences whose meaning is as blurred as their pronunciation is precise. But it cannot be denied that he put into words the mute dissatisfactions of the rank and file.

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No one, however, has been able to develop the chairman's arguments against his colleagues, on Spain, Greece, Atomic secrecy, and the absence of Party policy beyond *Let Us Face the Future.* These are all extremely serious points which other Party leaders slurred. They deserved far fuller discussion than they received. Standing Orders give ordinary delegates five minutes in which to put their case. High up on their platform, behind a battery of loud-speakers, the Executive has unlimited time at its disposal and speaks to resolutions skilfully drafted by the Standing Orders Committee. This year the advantage is overwhelming, since its spokesmen are visiting Cabinet Ministers who alone are in possession of the facts in dispute. They have mastered the Conference as adroitly as they have mastered the Parliamentary Party.

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It would be wrong to conclude from this victory that anxiety about our foreign policy and something more than anxiety about the personnel of our foreign service is not widespread among the loyal Right-wing of the Party. There has been a dangerous tendency this week upon the platform to assume that any critic of the Government is a fellow-traveller or a crypto-Communist. Herbert Morrison discovered long ago in his dealings with the Parliamentary Party that this assumption is neither justified nor efficacious in preserving discipline. It is equally unjustified and ineffective as between the National Executive and the delegates. The leadership deserves the complete confidence which it has won by its handling of the Party's short-term domestic programme. The support which it receives on foreign affairs is of very different quality—bewildered, uncertain and unstable. It has been gladly and loyally given the benefit of the doubt and that is quite a different thing.

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Of the debates themselves there is little to be said. On Monday, the resolution demanding active measures to combat Fascism was dealt with in a quarter of an hour. Alice Bacon made a model speech from the platform, and the Conference obviously felt that under a Labour Government this subject was out of date. By Tuesday it was clear that, except for the few key issues, there was to be no spate of speakers from the floor. Delegates had come to give their support to the Government and above all to Clem Attlee. Those who remember his status at Bournemouth six years ago will appreciate the significance of the ovation which he received.

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Wednesday was more like old times. The critics had an audience ready to applaud sharp attacks on the Foreign Service and our attitude to Spain and Palestine, and to appreciate Zilliacus's crack that Labour policy is "Winnie and water." But after lunch came the slaughter of the pygmies. Ernest Bevin still handles the Conference more masterfully than the House of Commons. When he sat down he had killed not only the criticism of himself but the case for Communist affiliation. Herbert Morrison wasted time worrying at the body before it was buried under a card vote. Finally, just to show that it had freely decided to become a victory rubber-stamp, the Conference refused to discuss the amendment to the Party constitution before voting for it.

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As long as things are going well this year's sort of Conference is accepted. The Cabinet dominates the National Executive, which in turn manages the Conference in such a way as to make reasoned opposition almost impossible. But do we want future Conferences to be Victory demonstrations instead of serious policy debates? Simple solutions, such as the proposal to ban Cabinet Members from the Executive, are obviously unworkable. But the problem will have to be faced if the Labour Party is not to accept the status vis-a-vis the Government which the Conservative Party enjoyed, a propaganda organisation, deprived of any part in the formulation of policy.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

CZECHOSLOVAK ELECTIONS

AT midnight on Sunday, May 26th, I stood amidst excited crowds on the Wensalaus Square, Prague, while loud speakers from the committee rooms of rival parties announced the results of the first general election held in Czechoslovakia since 1935. The Communist rooms adjoined those of the Catholic Right, the People's Party, and opposite was the headquarters of the Czech National Socialists, roughly speaking, the Centre party. Only the Social-Democrats were missing, their headquarters were elsewhere. The rival crowds were good humoured, each section cheering its own successes, with martial music blaring forth to fill the periods of waiting. The Communist cheers were loudest; not only was the success greater than anticipated but Prague itself, to everyone's surprise, had gone Communist.

A few days later, I stood with a dense crowd

workers on the main square in Bratislava which Communist leaders addressed from the balcony of the National Theatre. A general strike had been called to denounce election results in Slovakia. The Communists, beaten by the Democratic Party, accused them of fighting the election unfairly. They demanded that the reactionary elements in the Democratic Party be ejected prior to participation in the new Government. In Bohemia and Moravia, where the Communists, with 40 per cent. of the votes, were the largest party, they rejoiced at the fair and free elections; in Slovakia, where they had but 30 per cent., and were the second party, they demonstrated against their unfairness.

The elections were fair enough, though bitterly contested verbally. In Prague, the Chief of Police told me there was not a single incident which called for interference; in Bratislava, there was only one shooting incident. Meetings were packed and orderly; on the streets, small groups argued vehemently into the early hours. Election propaganda was everywhere; on the bridges, equally allocated to the four parties, and on the tramcars specially chartered to parade the streets bedecked with election slogans. Streets were littered with leaflets persistently distributed by hand and showered by planes.

Voting was compulsory for all over 18; only collaborators were excluded, but that included those only under suspicion. At the count, votes were checked and rechecked in the presence of party representatives. Though the voting itself was fair, there was, of course, pre-election pressure from the two main rival creeds, Communism and Catholicism. The former exerted it in the factories where they are firmly entrenched, and the latter from the pulpit.

Since, for the whole country, the Communists won 37 per cent. of the votes, the Social-Democrats only 15 per cent., and the Centre and Catholic Right-wing parties the balance, must Czechoslovakia be regarded as completely in the Russian sphere? The fairest answer would be "Not yet." Czechoslovakia is certainly neither a Russian satellite nor behind the "iron curtain," but whether she becomes the former or not depends partly upon the Western democracies and particularly Britain. The election, though largely fought on this issue, has not resulted in an unequivocal or irrevocable decision.

One explanation of the large Communist vote is that the anti-Communist parties embraced the West, openly advocated close relations with it, and thereby confirmed the belief that the West was reactionary. It helped to swing the progressive vote to the Communists; not to the Social-Democrats, because their pre-election tactics had made it difficult for the electorate to distinguish them from the Communists. The Communists, of course, foster the myth of Western reaction, and are, alas, provided with much useful ammunition. Misunderstanding and misrepresentation of our policy results from our failure to reach agreement with Russia, the linking of Britain and the U.S.A., and from the interpretation given our attitude towards Franco and our policy in Greece. Failure to drive Franco out of office, and to extirpate this last stronghold of Fascism in Europe, is doing great harm to the Social-Democratic cause. Equally damaging to the West was Churchill's Fulton speech. Czechoslovaks cannot dissociate the utterances of their war hero from British Government policy, which is accordingly thought to be directed towards an Anglo-American military alliance against Soviet Russia. All Czechs and Slovaks, of whatever political belief, look to Russia for defence and security, and an alliance against their ally is equivalent to a threat to their own independence and security. Failure to reach agreement with Russia, and the consequent failure to write the peace treaties, add to this insecurity, delay economic reconstruction, and thereby lead Czechoslovakia to lean both defensively and economically on the U.S.S.R.

Intentional misrepresentation of Britain in the Czech press is appalling. On the one hand, all attacks on British policy are publicised, with the *Daily Worker* most frequently quoted as an authoritative organ of public opinion; and on the other hand, official representations are made by Russian representatives when quotations from the British press appear explaining British policy towards Russia. The British Embassy at Prague, bravely countering the flood of misrepresentation, is exceptional among British Embassies in Europe in that the Ambassador and his wife, the first secretary and the press attaché, as well as some junior members of the staff, all speak the language of the country. It is a popular Embassy among all sections and is doing admirable work, but is hampered by a niggardly Treasury.

This misunderstanding of British policy reacted against the Social-Democrats as, retaining faith in British Social-Democracy, they also turn West for their true international Socialism. But their leaders had aligned themselves so closely with the Communists that the electorate could not distinguish between them, and, anyway, an election fought as between East and West has no place for internationalism. On the domestic front there was little difference in the election programme of the four parties. All were agreed on the Kosice programme, though the spirit in which the nationalisation decrees would be carried out would be different had the anti-Communists won. The main issue is the new Constitution, which must be determined within two years and fresh elections then held. The different election results as between Slovakia and the Czech lands make for difficulty. Despite the Slovak Communists' contrary statements during the election campaign, they now favour a centralised administration in order to minimise the reactionary influence of Slovakia. They cannot, however, impose the Constitution since a majority of Slovak deputies' votes is necessary for the enactment of any legislation affecting Slovakia, and that includes the new Constitution. The Slovak Democratic Party's victory is consequently a protection against centralisation encroaching on Slovakian local autonomy. It is also the reason for the Communists' post-election campaign to force the reactionary element out of the Democratic Party, and that element is there in the shape of former adherents of the Hlinka party. A compromise constitution is likely because Slovakia cannot afford to break away and does not wish to risk being thrown into the arms of her Soviet neighbour. Administrative local autonomy will probably be preserved with greater centralisation of national affairs.

When the Czechoslovak Parliament meets, all parties will support the re-election of President Beneš. The Communists will have the Premiership and the Social-Democrats the Deputy-Premiership. All parties will be represented in the Coalition Government according to their Parliamentary strength, and to them will be added the non-party experts of which the Foreign Secretary, Jan Masaryk, is one. In Parliament the Social-Democrats hold the balance. Provided their leaders cease to be "yes-men" to the Communists, and strive to hold the balance between West and East, both domestically and in foreign affairs, they may gain support, and attract the better elements in the anti-Communist parties, which must not be considered as entirely reactionary. But the Social-Democrats need a positive political philosophy with which to counter the Communist ideology. When the British Labour Party gained power they looked to it to provide it. But it has not. It would do so were it more conscious of the repercussions of its actions on the future of Social-Democracy in Europe, which is the only alternative to Communism on the one hand and Catholic reaction on the other. For instance, even if the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Spain had no effect, the gesture itself might help to dissipate the illusion that Bevin's foreign policy is but a continuation of the Tory policy, which to the Czechoslovaks means Munich. The success of British Labour is of vital importance to Europe and above all, to the survival of Social-Democracy there.

Czechoslovakia is the cockpit of the unfortunate and unnecessary struggle between the Eastern and Western political ideologies. It turns to the East for security, and formerly it looked West for much of its culture and for its political democracy. To-day, it hesitates about the latter. It is still suspicious of the West. Following free and independent elections, it has a Coalition Government of its own choice, but the success with which it retains that independence, and its sovereignty, for which the Czechs and Slovaks have struggled through four centuries, depends not upon itself, but upon the relations of the Great Powers.

ERNEST DAVIES

THE PLOT OF JULY 20th

(From a Correspondent)

ALTHOUGH the time has passed when the public was flooded with literature from Lord Vansittart and his colleagues, the theme of which was that there were not only virtually no "good Germans" nor ever had been, these writers (and speakers) managed to cause a good deal of confusion in people's minds, and it is now constantly being asked whether there was a genuine resistance movement in Germany. The answer to this important question can best be found by an examination of the circumstances leading up to the attempt on Hitler of July 20th, 1944, and its immediate results. Was it the culmination of a definite resistance movement of long standing inside Germany; or was it the effort of a small clique of militarists who saw the game was up and wanted to save something from which to prepare a new war, as we were led by our Minister of Information at that time to believe?

The writer recently had the opportunity of meeting in Germany some of the genuine survivors of the Plot (over twenty thousand persons were officially estimated to have been executed and an unknown number of others unofficially liquidated) and of reading reliable reports which have so far only appeared in Switzerland. From a close interrogation of the former and a scrutiny of the reports, it is possible to form a pretty clear picture of what happened.

The first concrete evidence of a plot is in 1938 when there was (among others) a powerful group of German officers who were opposed to an armed attack on either Poland or Czechoslovakia. This group was composed of elements, some of whom genuinely believed that the Wehrmacht should only be used in defence of Germany, while others had no such scruples, but believed that an act of real aggression would unite Europe against Germany. This group had advanced plans for removing Hitler should he then have gone to war, but whether or not these plans would have been carried out we shall never know, because Munich intervened.

That Himmler got wind of this plot there seems little doubt, because between Munich and the outbreak of war certain members of the group disappeared from the scene, and a fairly successful attempt was made to Nazify the army. However, in the summer of 1939 at least two emissaries from this group were unofficially in England, as was also Dr. Goerdeler, warning certain statesmen that war was imminent and considering what measures could be taken to thwart Hitler. Again we shall never know how effective these measures would have been, for in August came the bombshell of Hitler's Treaty with Russia, which so enormously enhanced his prestige that all but the most stalwart became convinced that he was an infallible diplomatic and strategic genius. In despair, General von Fritsch, perhaps the most important man in the military opposition group, virtually committed suicide during the Polish campaign.

Others, however, did not despair, and in the autumn of 1939 there were secret negotiations with the Allies, as a result of which it emerged that Britain and France were ready to negotiate for peace on two conditions: (1) that the Nazi Government must be overthrown, and (2) that

German troops must withdraw to where they had started from at the outbreak of war. Negotiations proceeded between the various anti-Nazi parties in Germany on this basis, and finally it was agreed that two blows should be struck by the Right and the Left respectively: the arrest or killing of Hitler and a General Strike. As may be imagined the negotiation and planning of this Putsch under the noses of the Gestapo could not be hurried, but they had reached a fairly advanced stage when, in May, 1940, Hitler struck again, and within a few weeks had become master of Western Europe.

It is easy now to criticise these people for not doing something effective then, but the fact is that resistance inside Germany was stunned by Hitler's overwhelming success, just as was resistance in France and other occupied countries; and it was not until the autumn of 1942—before the battle of Alamein and the disaster of Stalingrad, be it noted—that there were visible signs of further activity.

The question then was, whether, if the Opposition was prepared to throw away the benefit of the military successes achieved by Hitler, it could count on a fair and just peace, and certain important elements of the Opposition insisted on an assurance of this before they were prepared to act. It was for this reason that the Bishop of Chichester, who happened to be in Stockholm in May, 1942, was approached by two German pastors who were also there, Bonhoeffer and Schoenfeld by name, and presented with a memorandum and a request that he ask Winston Churchill publicly to express the willingness of the Allies to negotiate with an anti-Nazi Government for peace on the basis of the memorandum. This memorandum, which contained a list of the persons sponsoring it, proposed (1) a federal and democratic Germany; (2) reconstruction on "really Socialist foundations" ("wahrhaft sozialistischen Grundsältzen") and strict economic co-operation between the nations; (3) a European federation of free nations, including Britain, a free Czechoslovakia and Poland, and a general executive authority with one subordinate European army; (4) that Germany would pay reasonable reparations, break with Japan, repeal the anti-Jewish laws and restore Jewish property.

The Bishop returned to London, duly presented the document and was informed by Mr. Eden personally a fortnight later that we were not interested. Not long afterwards Mr. Winston Churchill, it will be remembered, after dining with President Roosevelt and without reference to his Cabinet, joined in a demand for "unconditional surrender," thereby making it clear that all Germans were to be considered enemies and that the Atlantic Charter, which he had proclaimed so loudly only a short time before, was not to apply to Germany. None of Hitler's previous successes had delivered such a shattering blow to resistance inside Germany, and it will be for historians to consider how long this demand prolonged the war and how many lives it cost.

It is important to know who was directly implicated in the plot against Hitler up to this time (1942), because no reasonable person can maintain that these people waited till it was certain or even likely Germany would be beaten before doing anything. They represented all parties except the Communists. The last-named were not included because after the Hitler-Stalin Treaty of 1939 they had ceased to oppose Hitler for the time being, and were therefore never again fully trusted by the others. On the Left there was the Social-Democratic Trade Union Group led by Wilhelm Leuschner and Julius Leber, who were ready to call a general strike as soon as they could be sure it would not mean a fruitless massacre of the workers by the S.S.; in the Centre there was a wide group of professional people led by one of the most remarkable men in the whole movement, Dr. Goerdeler (previously mentioned), who had been Mayor of Leipzig until deposed by Hitler in 1933; and on the Right were the "killers," most of them officers, such as General Beck, who had been dismissed by Hitler for suspected disloyalty in 1938, but including also a number of diplomats such as Adam von Trott and von Schulenberg, formerly Ambassador in Moscow.

One result of "unconditional surrender" may have been to give strength to a section of the resisters, known as the Moltke-Kreisure group, after its leader the Count von Moltke, who was South African by birth. This group also consisted of all parties, including even one or two Communists, but were for the most part more interested in long-term planning than "direct action" of any kind. The group had come into being before the war, and was largely instrumental in forming the Provisional Government which was to take over as soon as the Nazis had been displaced. The principal members of the Provisional Government were, as in 1944, to be Dr. Goerdeler (People's Party), Chancellor; Wilhelm Leuschner (Socialist), Vice-Chancellor; Julius Leber (Socialist), Home Office and Minister of Labour; General Beck (non-Party Soldier), Provisional Chief of State; von Hassel (Professional Diplomat), Foreign Minister; Dr. Josef Wirmer (Centre Party), Minister of Justice.

We now come to 1944. As soon as the British and American Forces had firmly established themselves in Normandy it became clear to most resisters that the only way to save Germany from complete destruction was to dispose of Hitler immediately, and about this time their ranks were swelled by Germans who before had wholeheartedly supported the war, such, for instance, as Rommel, who came in at the last moment.

Space does not permit a detailed description of the attempt of the 20th July; of how it so nearly succeeded that for several fatal hours the principal conspirators thought it had, and so put in action the machinery for taking over the reins of government, thereby revealing the whole organisation, General von Stüpnagel in Paris, for instance, actually placing the S.S. under arrest; of the consternation caused by the announcement that Hitler, though wounded, was still alive; nor of how the Plot might still have succeeded if there had been prepared in advance an alternative plan to put into effect in the event of Hitler surviving the explosion. It must suffice to say that the Nazis acted with ruthlessness and determination, and arrested the principals; that those who were not immediately shot, or did not shoot themselves, were subjected to every refinement of torture in order to discover who were their accomplices; and that the plot was so completely crushed that only a handful of the conspirators are alive to-day.

This does not mean that there are not a very large number of anti-Nazis alive in Germany to-day who would have taken part had they been allowed to, but, owing to reasons of security and the efficiency of the Gestapo, the smallest number of persons possible had to be brought into the Plot.

It may be asked what is the attitude of the Allies to the survivors. The Russians are naturally uninterested owing to the Communists' lack of participation, but, incredible though it may seem, the Allied military governments of the Western Democracies are almost equally so, and there are to be found, for instance, widows and families of such men as Doknanyi, one of the most irreconcilable opponents of Hitler, in a state of destitution, not only forbidden to touch their husband's money but also deprived of the pension which the widows of Nazis who were killed fighting for Hitler are receiving!

One final word of warning is necessary: just as in France and other countries after liberation, there were thousands who claimed to have been in resistance movements, who in reality never left the safety of their homes, so there are many Germans to-day who seek to obtain advantages by claiming to have participated in the 20th July. Such persons are not to be confused with men like the late von Kleist who, when asked by the President of "The People's Court" whether he had anything to say in reply to a charge of High Treason, replied: "Since Hitler came into power I have continually committed High Treason, and I only regret that it did not succeed. I have regarded the struggle against Hitler as a commandment from God."

MUSIC

The School for Fathers.—The enchanting *Quattro Rusteghi*, which has taken forty years to reach us, now offers an evening of unmixed pleasure to the patrons of Sadler's Wells; certainly no performance so polished and musical has been heard at this theatre since before the war. Wolf-Ferrari is not a composer of substance, but he is a charmer: he commands a flow of agreeable melody, he writes admirably for the voice, and he possesses an unerring sense of the stage. *I Quattro Rusteghi* (for which "The Taming of the Boors" would make a closer English equivalent) is a comedy of bad manners based on Goldoni, in which *Commedia dell'arte* types are musically clothed with just the right amount of sentiment and humanity. In performing a work of this sort everything depends on style; and it is just here that a new broom seems to have been at work at Sadler's Wells. Everything pleases. No commercial gamboge carpentry this time but a series of elegant stage pictures and handsome costumes from a young artist named Michael Whittaker; Dennis Arundell has somehow persuaded the whole cast to act with an ease and a lack of exaggeration which is the opposite of our horrible "comic opera" tradition; and musically it was an excellent performance, which inaugurated in an auspicious manner the regime of the new director, James Robertson. He obtained most delicate playing from the orchestra, allowed the singers all the scope they wanted, and managed the many ensembles of intrigue and perplexity with a lightness and precision which would hardly have disgraced Glyndebourne. From the excellent cast two names must be mentioned. Rose Hill, as the young heroine, sang sweetly, kept the comedy continually fresh, and never lapsed into the merely pert. In the *buffo* role of principal "boor," Howell Glynne fulfilled all the hopes I had founded on his Ford in *Sir John in Love*: he is, in fact, something of a discovery—at once a natural droll and a musical *basso cantante*, whose Don Pasquale, Leporello and Don Alfonso I await with impatience. May I add four words of practical advice to the management? Don't allow the performance to broaden with repetition; insist on a still clearer enunciation of Professor Dent's witty translation (Weinberger, 3s.); help the audience by printing a scene-by-scene synopsis in the programme; and improve the box office arrangements for intending patrons, who are often put off by the difficulty of getting a reply on the telephone and an impression (not always justified) that the theatre is invariably sold out. Remaining performances on June 15th, 18th and 20th.

Michael Tippett's Symphony.—This important work, which was reviewed in these columns after its Liverpool *première*, recently received a first London performance by the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr; the public cannot be blamed for poor attendance at a concert so poorly advertised in the newspapers. Tippett's symphony represents an heroic attempt to combine symphonic shape and proportions, and modern orchestral texture, with a predominantly contrapuntal cast of musical thought. It is questionable, I think, whether such a synthesis can ever be wholly successful; but Tippett's is one of the strangest and most original imaginations now working in music, and it is more than usually difficult to grasp all his intentions at a single hearing; one longs for score and records. The fierce acoustics of the Central Hall proved rather a strain on the physical ear, but the development of the composer's argument was never less than interesting, and at many moments (such as the end of the whole work) extremely impressive.

Victor de Sabata.—Even in a popular programme the fire and rhythmic intensity of this conductor make themselves felt; no comparable performance of the *Carnaval Romain* has been heard here since the L.P.O.'s famous *début* under Beecham, or of *L'Apprenti Sorcier* since Toscanini. I gather that there will shortly be further opportunities to hear Mr. De Sabata; if only they could include an *Otello* or a *Falstaff* at Covent Garden.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

THE new series of talks, "Getting the Most Out of . . .," promises well. Mr. John Summerson, with the eye of a John Piper, the sophisticated humour of a John Betjeman, and an immense fund of knowledge, took us for a most engaging stroll through an English town. The series could, of course, be indefinitely prolonged, to include most of those things in life which are unavoidable, but may seem a bore—experiences such as eating, watching a procession, playing with a child, turning out a lumber room, ransacking a secondhand bookshop, spending an hour "between trains" in the local cemetery, or—but you can continue the list for yourself.

There are some kinds of play (though fewer than is often imagined) which obstinately refuse the "invisible" medium, and Chehov's tragi-comedies are foremost among them. This is not because they contain action: they don't, and action is, in fact, easily expressed over the air. On the contrary, it is the effect of *inaction*—the stage picture of feckless, sad, lovable, defeated people showing us their fecklessness, sadness, lovableness, and sense of defeat in the way they look out of the window while someone else is speaking, or get pathetically entangled with their own pince-nez chains—it is the superficial behaviour of a number of people sitting together in a room, performing the ordinary actions of life; these make us free of their hidden dramas. What they say is usually beside this particular point; except at moments of crisis they embroider busily over it. So that the mere words alone, however well delivered (and *The Three Sisters* was unusually well spoken on June 3rd), leave us floating in a viewless limbo, and the threads at which we catch prove to have nothing attached to them. The situation is worsened by the fact that Chehov's stage is more often than not crowded with figures, so that we had great difficulty in grasping who was speaking; and even when the characters name one another the Russian habit of patronymics only confuses us still further.

Although the programmes of the "June Music Festival" have not been particularly adventurous, we have heard some fine works exceptionally well performed. Two new-comers from France, the violinist Devy Erlih and the cellist Pierre Fournier, have shown themselves to be very able executants in a characteristically French style: clean, sensitive, and not a note out of place. It would hardly be fair to judge M. Fournier's interpretative powers simply in the light of Rachmaninoff's 'Cello Sonata, which, although a vivid piece of romantic rhetoric, does not call for much subtlety or a very developed musicianship. In a Mozart sonata last Sunday, however, Devy Erlih showed that he has something to give besides the surface brilliance we expect of a young virtuoso; his tone and phrasing throughout this sonata were warm and expressive.

RECOMMENDATIONS: *Sunday, June 16th.*—Piano Recital (Clifford Curzon, 2.30 p.m.); Thomas Chatterton (7 p.m.).

Monday, June 17th.—Beethoven Symphony No. 6 (7 p.m.); Looking Around (7.40 p.m.); The Last Chance (9.15 p.m.). Arthur Bliss Quartet in B flat (11.25 p.m.)

Tuesday, June 18th.—Oliver Cromwell (L.P., 10 a.m.); Amadio trio (3.40 p.m.); J. B. Priestley (8 p.m.); Poor Dear Mr. Overt (10 p.m.).

Wednesday, June 19th.—Symphony Concert (7 p.m.)

Thursday, June 20th.—Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (L.P. 10 a.m.); Plain English (L.P. 3 p.m.); International Chess (7.50 p.m.); Beethoven septet (9.30 p.m.).

Friday, June 21st.—Symphony Concert (3 p.m.); Holland's Year of Peace (9.30 p.m.); D. H. Lawrence (Stephen Potter, 11.30 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Heartbeat," at the Odeon
"Bedelia," at the Plaza

A wave of second-rate domestic crime has been sweeping over the cinemas. Murder most feeble confronts us in various guises. Sometimes a husband, the last of the Pendragons, introduces poison-shrubs to his wife's bedroom, and retires himself to drugs and the attic; sometimes it is the wife who attracts and loathes men and has little difficulty in disposing of admirers. A female spider of this order is entertained in *Bedelia*. She has, it appears, been lucky on several occasions with a husband generously insured, and she makes mistakes over an inherited black pearl ring. Bedelia (Margaret Lockwood) is a beauty in more senses than one. But after a while one gets tired of admiring her (and of other people forever admiring); she has her portrait painted and we get rather tired of that, too. An air of mystery irritates rather than beguiles. "But, Marcia——" do you remember the Thurber drawing—"what do you want to look so inscrutable *for*?" The portrait painter, by the way, is really a detective, and doesn't resemble either. He looks, in fact, like an actor at the end of a particularly hard season. Only the husband, who survives being poisoned, seemed to me at all convincing in this entanglement, which leaves us mystified and dubious after it is all over. What sort of woman is Bedelia? She murders, we are told, cold-bloodedly for cash. But her last act before taking some of her own poison is to send for the helpful friend whom her husband should obviously marry next. Perhaps she only reads too many magazines.

Crime of a lesser order at least entertains in *Heartbeat*. This is a crib—scene by scene and at times almost word for word—from *Battement de cœur*. A good deal of the sparkle has gone from the crooks' academy which delighted us in the not very distinguished original. Mr. Basil Rathbone makes a very mechanical substitute for Saturnin Fabre, and I can't say that I prefer Miss Ginger Rogers's performance to that of Mlle Darrieux. The affair of embassies, watch-lifting and amorous manoeuvre is tediously drawn out, though both Miss Rogers and M. Jean Pierre Aumont as the cage-prowling lovers have charm in plenty.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Brothers Karamazov," at the Lyric, Hammersmith

Two melodramatic pistol shots and then, the smirking, sneering, chattering figure of Smerdyakov steps through the curtain and gleefully gives us the latest scandal about the Karamazov family. We have hardly recovered from our shocked amusement when the curtain has risen upon Father ("This Way to the Tomb") Zossima, speaking the unctuous and gluey lines of Ernest Milton. Ought saints to give away so freely to the burdens of office? Later, when he lays them down in the death scene, he is a prolonged embarrassment. But, after this shaky start, the Karamazov father comes in, Mitya makes his terrifying entrance, and the play moves admirably from crest to crest, carries Dostoevski's fantastic humour with it, and reaches the great climax of Ivan's dream and Smerdyakov's suicide. That is the high note of a proper dramatisation of the novel; and in France some years ago, a door was opened and there was Smerdyakov hanging. We do not calculate horror so coldly, and Mr. Alec Guinness evaded skilfully and turned the suicide very effectively into news. Mr. Alec Guinness's adaptation aimed, at combining the *roman policier* and the sermon—Alyosha looked like an earnest well-worked Anglican; what was watered down was the sense of conflict between faith and doubt which is fundamental in the novel, and cannot be properly stated unless Ivan carries far more weight than he is allowed here. It is not, therefore, perhaps Raymond Jaquarello's fault if he seemed overshadowed and insufficient in a part which was lacking weight of argument. Bernard Falk as the father, Alec Guinness as Mitya, gave powerful performances; Veronica Turleigh gave a delightfully finished performance of Madame Hohlakov, in a very exciting production.

MODERN ITALIAN PAINTING

SOME ninety modern Italian paintings are being shown at the Redfern Gallery, and the illustrious Venturi has written a preface to the catalogue. The Italian equivalent of the British Council is responsible for the choice of the twenty-three artists represented; and, so far as my limited knowledge goes, they have

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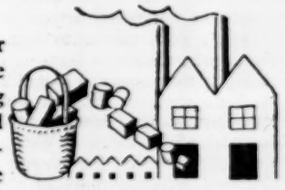
PLENTY



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been chosen well, though I regret the absence of Sirone, a beautiful draughtsman whose recent paintings show a romantic strain with affinity to the work of both John Piper and Henry Moore. We are most happy to welcome back to London work by Severini and De Pisis: they have both been missed. And then there is Carrà, whose high accomplishment and personal imagination are known to connoisseurs.

This leaves nineteen painters with whom we have to come to terms. This could not be easy in any case; and it is a great pity that the works of each individual have not been grouped together. (The same mistake was made in a Swedish exhibition a few months ago.) Is it not folly when introducing a number of unfamiliar artists thus to sacrifice the spectator's convenience to symmetry of hanging? Anyone who wishes to form an opinion has to rush repeatedly from room to room like a distracted hen.

I hope that the English public will share the enthusiasm which I had already formed in Italy for Morandi's Still Lifes. (With one exception the landscapes seem less happy, and one wishes that the exhibition included more of the assembled bottles that furnish his favourite theme.) Morandi is an extremely "pure" artist, intent upon relationships of form and colour and indifferent to the associations of his subjects. His sure sense of tone, his refinement of texture and his abhorrence of emphasis should ensure him a welcome here. But notice too how far these Still Lifes are pushed, with all their delicacy. These are pictures one would like to live with. Surrounded with vehement, not to say gesticulatory, pictures, they are the revelation of the show.

The other painters I find particularly interesting are Gino Rossi (two powerful portraits), Casorati (what a delicious Still Life!), Cantatore (again a good Still Life), Mafai, and the bizarre but greatly gifted Scipione. Carlo Levi has written a book, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, which is of extraordinary merit, but his painting seems altogether too slapdash. Guttuso, of whom I have heard much, revels in anger and horror: brilliantly expressive and ugly, his work strikes me as æsthetically unacceptable, but presumably his purpose is not in the first place æsthetic.

Though Fascism was less actively hostile than Nazism to good painting, it was far from friendly. (There is not a single Modigliani in any Italian public gallery!) But this exhibition shows there is a variety of lively and personal talent in Italy. ROGER MARVELL

JAVANESE DANCERS AT THE EMBASSY

THE first Indonesian embassy to England is very properly a cultural one. It comes to us by way of Holland, for the twenty young men and women of whom it is composed were students there when Holland was occupied, and contributed to the Resistance movement by performing underground the songs and dances of their native land. They come from Sumatra, Celebes and Java; from Java indeed come three really fine dancers, who grew up in the Royal Courts, where training in the classical ballet forms part of the moral education of youth, and they bring us some excellent examples of that supremely noble art. Bali is represented only by one dance—the popular *Djanger*—which in spite of its purely secular character has a singular origin, as the choral accompaniment of a temple trance dance. The group, under the inspired leadership of one of the most refined Javanese classical dancers, give an excellent rendering of it, and succeed, even on a Swiss Cottage stage, in conveying quite a lot of magic. The courting and wedding dances of Sumatra and Celebes, and the exquisite ceremonial Candle Dance from Sumatra are immediately accessible to all, as are also the sung pantuns, those famous short Malayan love-songs which bear a certain resemblance to the Spanish *copla*. Those sung were of the comic variety, the translation of one being:

> Darling, when you were a piece of bread
> I would eat you, even without butter.

The high lights of the performance, accompanied by gramophone records, are the magnificent *Kelono* in which the dancer mimes the love-toilet of a Javanese king, and a brilliantly comic burlesque, also classical, of the same highly refined dance, performed by the same dancer; three examples of classical Javanese combats, in which you will come in time to recognize the subtle and very significant differentiations of style which are so characteristic of the Javanese conception of life; and a really superb performance of *Pentjak*, the art of self-defence which is found throughout Indonesia, and which, by contrast, throws all forms of Western wrestling into a barbaric limbo.

BERYL DE ZOETE

Correspondence

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

SIR,—We feel uneasy at the continual statements that a struggle between Communism and Social-Democracy is to be the future political outlook (*cf.* Mr. Robert Boothby's letter). Such ideas are childish.

We are about 800 German P.o.W.s in Egypt, who are all former political prisoners. We participated in the ideological underground battle against Nazism. The opinion among all of us is strong that only a united working-class would be in the position to achieve a really democratic government and to avoid any further German aggression.

If German anti-Fascists were unwilling to learn their lessons from the past, it would be a great disaster for the future of Germany, and of the peace-loving nations, too. No one should forget 1918 and 1933. There is no fundamental difference *at all* between Communists and Social-Democrats.

In the autumn of 1944, we had many discussions about our future, and at that time some of us who were former Communists, and who favoured a united Socialist party, were called "betrayers" by Communist comrades. At first, we were a comparatively small group of politically-conscious Socialists and Communists in favour of unity; but at last they all agreed, former members of S.P.D., S.A.P., K.P.D., K.P.O., I.S.K., and members of the youth organisations, S.A.J. and K.J.V.D. We all learned from history.

Even if some leading Social-Democrats (Schumacher etc.) are opposed to the formation of S.E.P., we feel that our way is the right one. The ordinary workers in town and country, the rank and file of both parties want unity.

It is not in the interest of the German working-class to hang on to the apron-strings of one or other occupying Power. It creates hostility, and it might provide new sources for more and more conflicts.

The facts to-day are: while the Labour Movement has lost hundreds of thousands in concentration camps and by cold-blooded murder, a lot of leading people from the old Social-Democratic party and the Trade Unions are back on the stage, men who were almost too busy appeasing the Nazis in 1933. These T.U. leaders never agreed to a united working-class front, but some of them were willing to remain in office under Nazi direction. (Unfortunately, these are facts! Read, for instance, Evelyn Anderson's *Hammer or Anvil*.) These men had grown up with "their" organisations. They loved them for organisation's sake. To them the T.U.s and the S.P.D. ceased to be industrial and political instruments for carrying out the demands of the common people. Unfortunately, this section of the leaders had the biggest power, and so the working-class collapsed in 1933.

It is far beyond us to claim that the Communist Party was always right; it made mistakes, too. It is no use covering the past with a pink veil.

We think it the most sensible course to maintain the unity we found in concentration camps, gaols and prisons, and which we achieved in a lasting way as prisoners-of-war. Neither the British Labour Party nor the Russian Communist Party need fear a united working-class in Germany. On the contrary, we

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might be a bridge to prevent further misunderstanding. We think it could be one means of creating a united Socialist Europe, as the first step towards the brotherhood of man in the whole world.

Therefore we think that we are deeply justified in demanding our repatriation. We were promised that we would get home immediately after the German surrender. Our anti-Fascist comrades whom we knew in American captivity have been home since January of this year.

We know that the British authorities here, with the help of about thirty German anti-Fascists, are very busy segregating the 100,000 German P.o.W.s into political groups. But it is too slow. Most of us are wanted in Germany for administrative jobs, for the task of re-education, and for other essential occupations.

We do not fear the low rations at home. Our only intention is to help our people. But until now we have had the same treatment as every Nazi prisoner, in spite of the fact that even Mr. Churchill called the German political prisoners "allies" sometimes. It is not our fault that we were forced (some of us straight away from gaol) into the "Wehrmacht." All of us took the first opportunity to desert from a system which was the greatest enemy of humanity.

Don't you think that we might feel disappointed sometimes, that millions of Nazis are at home while we have to wait? W. F.

SIR,—Mr. Gerald Barry distorts my argument in order to refute it. I never said that I was opposed to co-operation between the Big Three. I said that a *world dictatorship* by the Big Three was open to the gravest objections; and this is the conception of the new world order which was originally put forward by the Soviet Government at Teheran, repeated at Yalta, and subsequently underlined by the insertion of the fatal veto clause in the Charter of Uno.

If Mr. Barry will do me the honour of reading my speech in the Foreign Affairs debate, in which I advocated the creation of a Western European Union, he will find that I laid more stress upon what, for want of a better word, I must call the "cultural" aspect, than upon any other. I agree with him that such an association of Powers must be inspired by a common political conviction, and based on principle. But, in the modern world, economics are bound to play a not unimportant part in any regional international organisation; for, without economic integration, it could not hope to survive. Mr. Barry has no valid reason for branding it, on this account, as a "shabby league of industrialism."

ROBERT BOOTHBY

SIR,—When this correspondence first started I hoped that in Mr. Zilliacus I had at last found that rare bird, a good Marxist. But now I am no longer so sure. He talks in the same breath of Socialism and democracy, and, by democracy, appears to mean the form of parliamentary government we still enjoy in this country.

Socialism, he tells us, may be achieved in this country by democratic means. So far, so good, whatever the interpretation placed on "democratic." Indeed, as Mr. Zilliacus hastens to point out, no less an authority than Dimitrov, the former Secretary-General of the Comintern, recently decreed that there was no reason why Socialism should not now be achieved by the slower but "painless" means of broadly-based democratic coalitions, exercising the right of the vote and majority rule. It may also be recalled that Lenin himself urged his followers to enter into practical compromises "with the bourgeois parties," or, for that matter, "with the devil and his grandmother," should this be necessary, in order to achieve their ends. With this portion of his letter, then, the strictest Marxist could scarcely find fault.

But Mr. Zilliacus goes on to talk of restoring or preserving "democracy" through "Socialism," and here I find him much harder to follow. He is, of course, in line with Marxist tradition, provided that by "democracy" he means "the dictatorship of the proletariat," or, as Lenin defined it, "power unrestricted by any laws." But is this what he means?

"Conservatives, Liberals and Labour alike," he writes, "are equally attached to democracy." Now I, as a Conservative, am strongly attached to parliamentary democracy as we know it in this country, but I am not in the least attached to the dictatorship of the proletariat, as I have seen it operating abroad. If, then, Mr. Zilliacus is attached to the same brand of democracy as I am, he is no Marxist, for, as Lenin himself wrote, "A Marxist is one who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Worse still, Mr. Zilliacus has now followed Professor Cole into the heresy of talking about "Liberal Socialism." How can Socialism be liberal? In the Socialist State there must surely be a one-party system and a single list at the elections. An anti-Socialist, or counter-revolutionary, opposition is surely unthinkable, for might it not come into office and thus put an end to the Socialist State. Moreover, a system which nationalizes all means of production and distribution, not to mention the banks, the press and the wireless, and which brings both capital and labour under State control, *ipso facto* concentrates unbounded power in the hands of the State, that is of the Government, that is of the Party, with a capital P. All of which brings us back to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, as both Lenin and Stalin tell us, is "in essence the dictatorship of the Party." But this, surely, is the antithesis of liberalism.

In short it seems to me either that Mr. Zilliacus is no more of a Socialist than I am, or else that he is simply carrying out the "painless" approach prescribed by M. Dimitrov, in which case all this talk of democracy is no more than an elaborate smoke screen.

FITZROY MACLEAN

CONSCRIPTION

SIR,—Does not Dr. Joad fall into the error of taking words for things? Descartes, the Father of Modern Philosophy, tells us in his *Méthode* how he struggled out of the jungle of outworn ideas by paying less attention to what men said than to what they did, since, that part of the mind by which we believe being different from that by which we think we believe, they often differ widely. Dr. Joad begins (and repeats it frequently) by arguing from the actual state of our present world as "Peace time." In one breath, he couples Switzerland and Portugal as "ill-defended countries"; and he maintains it is "no accident that all totalitarian States have employed conscription" Yet the thing was invented, for modern times, in the first revolutionary zeal of France for the Rights of Man. In earlier centuries, again, England was most conscripted and least totalitarian among the great countries. When Professor Trevelyan's *Social History of England* has had time to soak in, this will become a commonplace among educated readers. Yet we have already Moses and the Prophets in the shape of actual Swiss conditions at the present day and for centuries past. Let any doubter, when travel becomes free again, revise his prejudices by actual intercourse with Swiss Socialists, and by observation of how the country is managed. No nation has enjoyed more freedom and happiness, and in none has healthy individualism entered more deeply into men's souls, than in that little republic. Dr. Joad, all through, confuses Liberty with Licence as though J. S. Mill had never written.

Totalitarian States have indeed employed Conscription, just as they have employed Education and Licence, which are still more potent forces. But this is no fatal and necessary sequence. When the French Revolutionaries, having successfully defended themselves, began to turn the tide all over Europe, and the reactionary Coalition looked to Conscription for safety, this was thwarted by the super-despotic King of Prussia on the ground that it was "infinitely dangerous" to arm the Common Man. I am old enough to recall vividly how British philosophers and pastor

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and publicists often invoked Liberalism as a protecting genius against tyranny. Is it not the problem of true Liberalism to get the advantages of team-work and numbers, without dulling the edge of healthy initiative? Dr. Joad presses logic—and imperfect logic at best—to the detriment of social and political facts which press upon us. Where Army and Nation, inspired alike by a true defensive spirit, work in harmony, there they react upon each other. We need not then confuse, as Dr. Joad confuses, between the soldier whose main job is to kill his fellow-man, and him who, as Ruskin pointed out, has the trade of exposing his own life in defence of the community.

Cambridge. G. G. COULTON

TRANSYLVANIA

SIR,—Progressive Britain would, I feel, render a good service to herself as well as to the cause of world peace by supporting Hungary in her claim for a readjustment of her frontier with Rumania.

The unanimous decision of the four Foreign Ministers in Paris—reached, as correspondents pointed out, at an astonishing speed—to return the whole of Transylvania to Rumania, cannot be justified on any reasonable ground. Both Hungary and Rumania were Axis satellites during the war. Both have started "working their passages home" since then. The rulers of both have shown a sincere desire to co-operate with each other on terms of equality and in the spirit of democracy. But can such a co-operation be genuinely endorsed by the masses as long as they see that the whole of the province disputed between them, with her one and a half million Hungarian inhabitants, that is, roughly 25 per cent. of the total population, is handed over to the Rumanians? A decision like this is bound to promote a feeling of grievance amongst Hungarians and aggressiveness amongst the Rumanians.

The argument that the whole of the disputed area must belong to Rumania because it did before the so-called Vienna Award does not seem more conclusive to me than the fallacy fostered by the believers in the Hungarian "St. Steven's Idea" that it must as a whole belong to Hungary because it did so before the first World War. "Historical rights," whether based on thousand or twenty-five year old injustices, must not interfere with a reasonable settlement. That the Vienna Award, as well as all other verdicts passed by the Fascist Great Powers should be nullified, is a matter of course, but, fortunately, nowhere else was this principle interpreted as a necessity to go back to the *status quo* before Hitler and Mussolini. Why then should this exception be made at Hungary's expense? Why should democratic Hungary be snubbed, humiliated and eventually driven into reactionary hysteria as she was, by similar treatment, in 1918-19?

I confess that I am taking up this matter most reluctantly. First, because I know how the Hungarian regime of the inter-war period and its friends abroad used the Hungarian frontier and minority grievances to discredit and to destroy the very embryo of any democratic arrangement amongst the peoples of South-East Europe; and secondly because as a Hungarian I feel profound gratitude to the present Rumanian Government for their very honest and far-reaching endeavours to secure equal rights for their Hungarian subjects. But a stable settlement cannot be based on contempt of past crimes or on appreciation of present good will. And a failure to bring about a stable settlement would necessarily endanger the very purposes for which the Rumanian Government have made such praiseworthy efforts. PAUL IGNOTUS

ALIEN VOLUNTEERS

SIR,—Referring the decision of H.M.G. to transfer the Anders Army from Italy to the United Kingdom, in order to be released there and to refuse British soldiers (Alien volunteers, enlisted in North Africa) the same, I wish to tell you my opinion, knowing the both categories from North Africa, Italy and Austria.

The majority of these Aliens volunteered in order to help the war effort of the British Army in its fight against Fascism. It means, from ideological reasons, they came from the concentration camps of Vichy-France and from the slave labour units of the Laval-gang. Among them are people, who fought in 1936-39 against Fascists in Spain, or elsewhere. They served in the British Army, doing a very good job in the different units where they have been attached (R.A.S.C., R.A.O.C., R.E., R.E.M.E., Interpreter Pool, C.L.U., etc.). Several of them—and not few—have been attached to the different divisions of the Allied Force Headquarters in North Africa, later in Italy and now in Austria to the Political Division of the Allied Commission for Austria (B.E.) In Algiers, in Bari, in Caserta, in Naples, in Rome, in Florence, in Klagenfurt, in Graz and in Vienna, these alien volunteers with the three British campaign ribbons on their chests, broadcast Allied texts to the enemy, wrote texts in different languages, wrote the leaflets and edited the newspapers which have been dropped in millions of copies into the enemy territories by Allied planes; they monitored the radio propaganda of the enemy, served in the M.E. Commandos, etc. The P.W.B., the nerve centre of the modern political warfare, used dozens of these Alien volunteers, in very important and highly confidential jobs, which in peace-time need the responsibilities of an officer. As far as I know, the British Army have never been betrayed by giving these Aliens such highly confidential jobs. They are working now, with knowledge, that in the case of any country receiving them after their respective release from the British Army, they cannot enter the country which used their services and democratic zeal in the time of the greatest emergency.

Political Division, ALEXANDER CSERESNYES
Allied Commission for Austria.

FOOD PARCELS

SIR,—That a man of Mr. Evelyn Waugh's intellectual powers should use the subject of starvation in Europe to rate Mr. Gollancz for his political convictions struck me as being both illogical and petty.

If Mr. Waugh had done even a quarter of what Mr. Gollancz has done to fight hatred and national prejudice, he might have a right to be a spokesman for his own party. Charity is not a virtue that can be measured by the yard-stick of politics and Mr. Gollancz, in his campaign for universal charity, has risen as high above politics as Mr. Waugh, in order to give expression to his own views, has sunk.

I may add that I belong to no political party myself and am willing to concede that a Conservative Government might have allowed private parcels to be sent to Germany. On the other hand, Conservative spokesmen and newspapers have not been noticeably active in advocating the teaching of Christ: "If Thine enemy hunger, feed him."

CLARITA MILROY
Catholic Committee for Relief Abroad.
28, Knightsbridge, S.W.1.

VICTORY PARADE

SIR,—Two points struck me about the Victory Parade.

(1) The vast numbers of people who turned out, some to wait 16 hours for it, in spite of the psychological "blitz" against the Parade carried out by almost all Tory newspapers. This is interesting as it bears comparison with the people's reaction to Tory newspaper propaganda at the General Election. The people, it seems, still read the papers—and still make their own decisions.

(2) The magnificent manner in which the event was "covered" by the B.B.C. Though some of the B.B.C. reporters were not exactly inspired in their descriptions, I find that after reading the newspapers, the B.B.C. had missed nothing. There was also an immediacy about the broadcast that the newspapers could not hope to emulate. The papers were not wise to close down on Parade Day.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Only a strong natural taste for history can survive its teaching in schools. In my time we were taught the wars and intrigues of Plantagenets and Lancastrians, king and castle, knight and bishop, a weary game of faceless chessman. And modern children are taught the moves of peasants' pawns, equally faceless. As for contemporary history, how can it ever be written? The material is so vast that dons will be found gibbering amid illimitable documents.

If I were a teacher of history—but Providence looks after children, and I am not—I should follow two simple rules. First, no child under my guidance should read any history which was not also literature. This would eliminate much of the stuff compiled under German scholastic influence. But it would leave many of the works of the great Whig succession of Britain, whose moral certainty about liberty has shaped the thinking of our nation. It is to their credit that every British child knows that Joan of Arc was the hero of the Hundred Years, and Washington the unblemished paladin of the American war. (That the colonists were sometimes as trying as Kenya settlers is totally forgotten.) Secondly, I should turn the scholars loose on those of the memoirists who have the knack of vivid description of their own fellows. They are far the best historians. Why is it, for instance, that Charles VII of France, an interesting and able king, is such a shadowy figure, while his horrible son is as lively as any modern despot? Simply that Louis XI had de Commines about his court.

One of the most delightful of memoirists is Henry Cockburn, whose *Memorials of His Time* cover the half-century from 1779 to 1830. *The Memorials* are entirely about Edinburgh, of whose people they give a warm and witty picture. They are as entertaining, as a record of manners, as a Jane Austen novel. And while Edinburgh was, of course, only a minor capital, it was by no means a negligible place.

Henry Cockburn belonged to the core of its society. He was a nephew of no less a personage than Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, and called cousin with the whole Dundas clanjamfry whose power over Scotland was absolute for two generations. In fact, Dundas gave him the job of Lord Advocate Depute early in his career at the Scottish Bar, in the hope of weaning him from his heretical Whig views; but dismissed him after two years, to the great relief of his conscience, for he had accepted the post merely to avoid affronting his family. He was a natural Liberal, both from a lively imagination, a sense of history, and a lifelong passion for freedom; and the reaction of a sensitive mind from the crude and heartless Toryism of his surroundings confirmed the tendency of his growing opinions. It was more to his advantage, as an author, that he bubbled with wit, viewed his contemporaries with amused liking, and wrote a gay style. He was a loving friend—his Life of Francis Jeffrey is dulled with too much admiration—and where he disliked a man, he held his tongue. His description of his friends among the young Whigs includes no sketch of Brougham, whom one is sure he found antipathetic. But his liking was broad and heartily reciprocated; he was said to be the best-loved man in Scotland. Indeed, this book has that unmistakable charm which diffuses from the character of a writer who is both good and happy.

For most of its period, Britain was at war, and if for nothing else, it would be worth reading now for the parallels between that war and ours. Cockburn, though an Edinburgh Reviewer, and pessimistic about the war, served like all the Edinburgh advocates in the Volunteers, the Home Guard of the time.

> We actually drilled our two companies almost every night during the four winter months of 1804 and 1805, by torchlight, in the ground flat of the George Street Assembly Rooms. The parades, the reviews, the billetings, for a fortnight or three weeks when on "Permanent duty" at Leith or Haddington, the mock battles, the marches, the messes—what scenes they were!

When the war ended, there was the same release in popular feeling which we have been experiencing.

> Fear of invasion, contempt of economy, the glory of our arms, the propriety of suppressing every murmur of any home abuse, the utter absorbtion of every feeling in the duty of warlike union, became all inapplicable to existing things; and after a little time for settling into peace, the removal of the foreign pressure was followed by a rebound of internal improvement which will mark itself by its results on many ages of our history.

The political frost was so long-set and deep that it took years to melt. The French Revolution, in Scotland, resulted in a reaction disgraced by a series of vindictive and unjust sentences for sedition. Thereafter for many years no political meeting was held in Edinburgh, save one against slavery in 1814. Every position of public office lay in the hand and patronage of Dundas. The young Whig advocates, Jeffrey, Horner, Cockburn and their friends, had no hope of making a living at the Bar; which was why they had the leisure to found the Edinburgh Review. Cockburn is vitriolic on this totalitarian régime. For instance, the Edinburgh Town Council, all appointees of the Tories:

> Within this pandemonium sat the town council, omnipotent, corrupt, impenetrable. Nothing was beyond its grasp; no variety of opinion disturbed its unanimity, for the pleasure of Dundas was the sole rule of every one of them. Reporters, the fruit of free discussion, did not exist, and though they had existed, would not have dared to disclose the proceedings. Silent, powerful, submissive, mysterious, and irresponsible, they might have been sitting in Venice.

As for the Tory party, his record has a modern ring.

> The great Tory object was, to abuse everybody but themselves, and in particular, to ascribe a thirst for bloodshed and anarchy, not merely to their avowed political opponents, but to the whole body of the people.

Cockburn rightly discounts the brief 1806 Whig government as a flash in the pan, and describes the real advent of reform in the late Twenties. None the less when the Liberals came into power, they were thunderstuck at a change which had scarcely been visible on the surface, but was due to "deep natural causes." Just as we were last year.

Cockburn's best pages, however, are his characters of his times. He liked "the singular race of excellent Scotch old ladies," a race which is numerous in Edinburgh even till to-day. As for instance Mrs. Dundas:

> Age had made her incapable of walking even across the room; so clad in a plain black silk gown, and a pure muslin cap, she sat, half encircled by a high-backed black leather chair, reading; with silver spectacles stuck on her thin nose, and interspersing her studies, and her days, with much laughter and not a little sarcasm. What a spirit! There was more fun in that chair than in the theatre or the church. I remember one of her granddaughters stumbling, in the course of reading the newspapers, on a paragraph which stated that a lady's reputation had suffered from some indiscreet talk on the part of the Prince of Wales. Up she of fourscore sat, and said with an indignant shake of her fist and a keen voice: "The damned villain! Does he kiss and tell!"

Or Mrs. Rochead of Inverleith:

> She would sail like a ship from Tarshish, gorgeous in velvet or rustling in silk, and done up in all the accompaniments of fan, ear-rings and finger-rings, falling sleeves, scent bottle, embroidered bag, hoop, and train, all superb, yet all in purest taste; and managing all this seemingly heavy rigging with as much ease as a full-blown swan does its plumage, she would take possession of the centre of a large sofa, and at the same moment, without the slightest visible exertion, would cover the whole of it with her bravery, the graceful folds seeming to lay themselves over it like summer waves.

For men, Cockburn uses a broader nib. Thus Braxfield, the hanging judge who was the prototype of *Weir of Hermiston*.

> His very name makes people start yet. . . . Within the range of the feudal and civil branches, and every matter depending on natural ability and practical sense, he was very great . . . It is impossible to condemn his conduct as a criminal judge, too gravely, or too severely. It may be doubted if he was ever so much in his element as when tauntingly repelling the last dispairing claim of a wretched culprit, and sending him to Botany Bay with an insulting jest. A juror in one of the treason trials told Cockburn as he was passing behind the bench to get into the box, Braxfield, who knew him, whispered: "Come awa, Maister Horner, come awa, and help us to hang ane o' thae daamed scoondrels" . . . One of the accused pled that all great men had been reformers, "Even our Saviour Himself." "Muckle He made o' that," chuckled Braxfield in an under voice, "He was hanget."

Or there is Lord Eskgrove, the comic foil to Braxfield.

> As was usual, then, with stronger heads than his, everything was connected by his terror with republican horrors. I heard him, in condemning a tailor to death for murdering a soldier by stabbing him, aggravate his offence thus, "and not only did you murder him, whereby he was be-reaved of his life, but you did thrust, or push, or project, or propell, the le-thall weapon through the belly-band of his regiment-al breeches, which were his Majes-ty's!"

But Cockburn's best judges, of a series superbly illustrated by the Raeburn portraits which hang in the Parliament House and the National Gallery of Scotland, are Hermand and Newton. Lord Hermand was an enthusiast, governed by his "intensity of temperament."

It was Hermand who convulsed the Church Assembly by declaring:

> "Sirs! I sucked in the being and attributes of God with my mother's milk!"

Newton is the subject of Raeburn's most famous portrait, that swirled brilliancy of scarlet robe and crimson face through which broods the heavy intelligence of the man. Cockburn's character interprets the picture.

> An excellent legal writer and adviser, deep and accurate in his law . . . Honest, warm-hearted and considerate, he was always true to his principles and his friends. But these and other good qualities were all apt to be lost in people's admiration of his drinking. His daily and flowing cups raised him far above the evil days of sobriety on which he had fallen . . . His potations and bulk made him slumbrous both in society and in Court; and his management of this judicial inconvenience was very curious. In Court his head generally rested either on his heaving chest, or on his hands crossed on the bench, while after getting a grip of the case, his eyes were locked in genuine sleep. Yet from practice and a remarkable quick ear and intellect, nobody could say anything worth hearing without his instantly raising his huge eyelid, and keeping it open, and directing his powerful knowing eye, like a mortar, at the speaker, till he got what was necessary; after which, when the babbling began, down sunk the eyelid again, till lighted up by the next shot. The only way to wake him was to say something good, and this never failed.

Cockburn draws the political and literary figures of that sparkling Regency Edinburgh, and its ministers and professors. Its poor, too, in the beguinage of St. Trinity founded by Mary of Gueldres; and with passion, its buildings old and new. He adored mediæval houses and trees, and belaboured the simplicity of the Georgian New Town which we now think so gracious.

This review is given topicality by the recent reprint of the *Memorials* by Grants of Edinburgh.* But the reprint is an unsuccessful abridgment. Sorry I am to say it, for Grants is one of the great bookshops. But the abridger has omitted Cockburn's gayest sallies, and most of the very interesting politics, as "As dead as the Dodo," I darkly suspect because of political bias: and has even improved his grammar. This mixture of obscurantism and impudence has dehydrated the original. The pleasantest edition is that of 1908, very well illustrated. But this tidying up of Cockburn's pleasurable, discursive memoirs is part of the ugly streamlining of our time; when last I was in Edinburgh they told me that Bonaly is being converted into flats.

FREDA WHITE

* *Memorials of His Time*, by Lord Cockburn. Abridged with Notes. *Robert Grant*. 12s. 6d.

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Behind the Japanese Mask. By SIR ROBERT CRAIGIE. *Hutchinson.* 21s.

A Short Economic History of Modern Japan. By G. C. ALLEN. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Sir Robert Craigie's *Behind the Japanese Mask* is to Grew's *Ten Years in Japan*, as Sir Nevile Henderson's *Failure of a Mission* is to Dodd's *Diary*. The value of the British career diplomatists' books is low compared with that of their American colleagues. Sir Robert's book inevitably challenges comparison with Grew's. Whereas Grew's has the value of a diary in which "if occasion has more than once occurred to revise my judgments, the record has been scrupulously kept from day to day," Sir Robert's is written "after three years of mature reflection." It is easy to be wise after the event, and Sir Robert's portraits of Japanese statesmen, done when Japan was well on the way to defeat, are probably quite different from what they would have been if drawn earlier. Then the author makes no use of official sources. Why I do not know. Grew's book was published earlier, and he used them without endangering national security.

The chapters on personal experiences, far from giving, as the author hoped, "body" to the work, make it only more tenuous. They are confined to social chit-chat and go to prove how completely ambassadors are cut off from the lives of ordinary people. These chapters have, for instance, none of the liveliness of John Morris's *Traveller from Tokyo*, which covers the same period. Nor does Japanese art or culture call forth any comment from Sir Robert Craigie.

The trouble with the book is that it is neither serious nor amusing. It is neither flesh nor fowl, but it is a good red herring across the scent of appeasement diplomacy. It really boils down to an apology for Chamberlain's Far Eastern policy. For too long Sir Robert believed Japan's mask was a living face, and it is hard work explaining away this mistake. It is surely overworking the great man theory to say "had Ugaki who was then (Oct. 1938) nearing seventy, been ten years younger he might well have saved his country from following its path to destruction." But the futility of the appeasement mentality is best shown in his remark that in 1937 "Japan could have been diverted from the course she subsequently followed, had it not been for one fact—the war with China." This is equivalent to saying the fire could have been put out if it had not been alight.

Sir Robert's memory gives a very innocuous paraphrase of the Craigie-Arita agreement. It was the wording of the official communique which was so offensive to China, especially the section which stated that Britain recognised that Japanese forces in China "have to suppress or remove any such causes or acts as will obstruct them or benefit their enemy." I recall that Chinese journalist friends in Hong Kong were incensed by the use of the word "enemy" which they were forbidden by the local censorship to use, because the Colony was neutral in the "Incident." Further, it was not only consular officials (as Sir Robert states), but also British nationals who were warned against any acts or measures prejudicial to the Japanese.

This betrayal of League decisions shocked not only the Chinese, but even the British in China, and after reading the author's justifications of the formula, I still agree with the British Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai which said "that it was likely to result in a deplorable betrayal of British rights, interests and obligations in China." Had Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr been invited from Chungking to the Tokyo talks, the outcome might have been different. A book by him covering the same years would be worth reviewing.

Coming to Sir Robert's judgments of Japanese statesmen, we find that if they had good western manners he was prejudiced in their favour. He calls Shigemitsu, now arraigned as a war criminal, "a man of ability and integrity," and he even has a good word for the arch-fascist, Seigo Nakano. Suggesting Prince Chichibu as a wise choice for Regent if the Emperor abdicated, he says the Prince "had no responsibility for events leading up to the war; indeed rumour had it that he was kept under house arrest during 1941 and 1942." The rumour, as I heard it, was that the Prince's house arrest was because of his connections with a Young Officer conspiracy, and not because of any opposition to the war.

There are a few misprints of Japanese words. "Hakoni" for "Hakone" (p. 9), "Terarchi" for "Terauchi" (p. 65) and "Kaigon" for "Kegon" (p. 97).

A Short Economic History of Modern Japan by Professor Allen is, within its compass, a competent book. The introductory chapters show clearly that the economic revolution accompanying the Meiji Restoration was neither so sudden nor so complete as earlier scholars believed. Before the arrival of Perry's Black Ships, the new system was growing up within the matrix of the old, and right down to the outbreak of the Pacific War, it never emerged completely from that matrix.

In later chapters the author traces the peculiarities of Japanese industry and finance, the difficulties arising from the lack of a strong central bank, the state's policy of fostering strategically necessary industries and then handing them over to private enterprise, the interlocking of state and zaibatsu, the rhythm of the silk trade and the economic effects of Japan's four wars.

It is regrettable that he barely touches on the conditions and struggles of the workers and peasants. The sub-contract system of labour, the growth of trade unions, the increasing indebtedness of the peasantry, strikes and their agrarian equivalent, tenancy disputes are not mentioned. Yet surely they are all important economic phenomena which could be treated objectively and statistically as the rest of the material is.

It is a pity, too, that the author could not have carried his study on from 1937 to the outbreak of the Pacific War, and shown in more detail the extremely interesting emergence of the new Zaibatsu, operating in Manchuria, and closely allied to the military. It was the partnership of these new magnates in chemical industry with the military and a group of Manchurian-trained officials who returned to Japan and entered the Cabinet which marked the final stage of Japan's war preparations.

Professor Allen has a deeper understanding of the causes of the war than Sir Robert Craigie has. He says:

> In a sense the very forces which had supplied the impulse to economic expansion during the Meiji era, and the very conditions which made the development of Japan so great and so rapid, have been responsible for the catastrophe in which she has now become involved.

It is a compliment to his book to say that after reading it one is left with a feeling of curiosity about what is happening now. One wishes that the iron curtain could be raised sufficiently to show something more than Tojo getting slapped, to show some of the evidence of the war trials and of the working of Shogun MacArthur's policy.

MAX BICKERTON

AN ELIOT STUDY

"Four Quartets" Rehearsed: A Commentary on T. S. Eliot's cycle of poems. By RAYMOND PRESTON. *Sheed and Ward.* 5s.

I wonder whether very many people feel that their education began as my own did, with the notes to *The Waste Land*. It would be a great delight to have similar notes on *Four Quartets*, and I hope it will not be left to an annotator to give them to us; I would like them from the hand of the poet himself. They would, of course, not help in elucidating the difficulties of the later work, any more than the notes to *The Waste Land* helped us earlier. But they would be interesting in themselves, and illuminating on those processes of adaptation and transformation which have always been strong and complex in Mr. Eliot, and which are marked enough in any contemplative poet whose mind is at all richly stored. Eliot has a habit of saving up odd phrases from remote corners of literature and lustrously inserting them, sometimes in a different sense, in his own verse. When, by chance, one comes across the original of one of these recondite phrases and it clicks into place in the memory, one winces slightly at one's own delight; for there is a certain squalor in even accidental textual collation, as there is in most forms of detection. And, as in detection, it is easy to over-interpret a "clue," or to see one where none exists. I would like Mr. Eliot to put our minds at rest on these points.

Annotation is not Mr. Preston's aim, though he incidentally tells us of several unexpected sources. His aim is a "rehearsal" as he calls it, of the four poems: a preparatory examination of their background, tradition, drama and scope. There have been one or two studies of this kind already—notably an excellent essay, to which Mr. Preston frequently refers, by Miss Helen Gardner—but I have seen none so detailed and complete as this. It is executed with modesty and ability, and though it is not difficult to guess where Mr. Preston's religious sympathies are placed, he draws an unspoken distinction between literary exegesis and religious enthusiasm. He permits himself merely to say in a concluding note: "Finally, to understand *Four Quartets* we need to live with them, and even to live by them." His book is doubly valuable for this mixture of sympathy and restraint. He can elucidate things for us, as no one without some measure of spiritual and intellectual kinship with Eliot could—and at the same time he abstains from "getting at" us.

He takes the four poems in order. His commentary on the first and most elusive of them, *Burnt Norton*, is extremely valuable, especially for its emphasis that the difficulty of the poem largely resides in the fact that "the poet is expressing a state which is neither faith nor doubt: he is *on the edge* of faith." The difficulty of the poem is inherent in its speculative character, its hesitant attempts to *feel* for a moment the nature of eternity; the discipline of words, several times described in the course of the poems, is an adumbration of a discipline of the mind, and an effort to render precise the demands of that discipline. A clear understanding of *Burnt Norton* makes the later poems far more easy to apprehend (there is never, I think, any difficulty in finding even the subtlest passages immediately good reading-matter); but there are many passages needing detailed exposition from any critic who ventures to discuss them, and some of these passages Mr. Preston expounds brilliantly; the grim "metaphysical" *scherzo* in *East Coker*, for example, is, for me, completely refreshed by his clarification of the symbols of the "wounded surgeon" and the "ruined millionaire." I am ashamed to say I had never realised who *they* were.

Only a few points in Mr. Preston's essay seem to me inaccurate or insufficient. The image of the rose-garden does not, as he suggests, actually occur in the scene between Harry and *Mary* in *The Family Reunion*. And I am surprised that he dismisses the imagery of the children with scarcely a mention in his examination of the opening section of *Burnt Norton*; for the whole section falls into focus much more clearly when the children are realised as the sensuous crystallisation—the image—of "what might have been." Eliot's use of the never-existing children is here precisely the same as Kipling's use of them in the story to which Eliot himself has, I believe, acknowledged a debt. I should have thought this wonderfully succinct adaptation to have been worth mentioning: it is a particularly apt example of a kind of assimilation very characteristic of Eliot. Again, though Mr. Preston is doubtless right in remarking of the lines:

> After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
> Had passed below the horizon of his homing,

that " the *flickering* suggests the tongues of flame, and *dark* the mystery of the Holy Spirit ", it is a little perverse to ignore the fact that the passage is also about aircraft. It is wholly in accordance with what Mr. MacNeice has called Eliot's " monumental wit," that a fire-watching episode should have its place in a poem about the fires of Hell, Purgatory and Pentecost.

But these are minor points. As a whole, Mr. Preston's book helps the reader enormously. After reading it, and then re-reading the poems (they are still reassuringly far from " easy ") it is possible to wonder how, with all the lacunae in one's understanding, the poems had hitherto meant so much. This is perhaps only to recall the enormous power of their *poetry*, the high, simple order of their verbal beauty. They are poems which demand—and, happily, compel—auditory attention of an intensity which few poems demand, and which the poetry of a later generation than Mr. Eliot's has not demanded at all. One has to develop—and it is entirely worth while—an ear alert for subtle repetitions and transformations of single words. There is nothing of journalism about *Four Quartets ;* and to appreciate them one has to dismiss those aspects of the mind which respond to journalism either in prose or verse.

HENRY REED

HUMUS AND THE FARMER

Humus and the Farmer. By FRIEND SYKES. *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

It is no part of a reviewer's job to join in controversy. But it is very difficult to avoid being thrown neck and crop into it by Mr. Sykes. There are no half measures about him. In the great agricultural argument *Humus versus Artificial Fertilisers*, he is the new champion of Humus and he belabours the artificial manure world with sincerity and considerable relish. He is not, however, just a chucker-out. He raises his opponents tenderly after punishment, points them to shining heights and—unusual, this—tells them how to get there. Without taking sides in this controversy, which may yet tear the farming world in two, there seems to be no question that Mr. Sykes has evolved a farming system that omits artificial fertilisers completely and produces large crops of high quality. He has done this on land of the most difficult nature, superimposing on the compost teachings of Sir Albert Howard a cultivation technique of great intelligence and originality.

He is utterly convinced that the health of mankind is bound up with the soil, that the soil is losing fertility owing to the use of artificials, and that the advance of disease in plant, animal and man, in spite of to-day's scientific knowledge, is due to the poor quality foods coming from that soil. His answer is in two parts, to multiply dung by ten by making it into compost, and to use an eight-year rotation of crops containing a four-year ley of interesting mixture. Special cultivations and grazing play their parts and every field is subsoiled once in the eight years. Mr. Sykes's farming system, as distinct from his composting, can be carried out by any farmer, great or small. There can be little doubt that it will recharge the soil with fertility as it has done on his thin land at Chute. It is a pity to leave discussion of his farming at that point because it is full of brains and contains a great mass of other detail to prove it.

The weakness of the compost process is the handling, especially the turning. Mr. Sykes's men refused in the end to turn over any more muck by hand and so he designed, and had made, a mechanised muck-shifter. Now this is an expensive bit of machinery, £500 or £700, according to type, and suitable, therefore, in Mr. Sykes's own judgment to farms of 200 acres and over. These farmers, however, are only 10 per cent. of all in Britain. It is not a complete answer to say that the remainder can be covered by contractors working like threshing contractors. Muck-making and shifting are more bound to definite periods than threshing.

Time may give an answer with a cheaper machine or with contractors blessed with enough labour to run many machines. Till then, it appears that the smaller farmer cannot use compost. Mr. Sykes agrees, however, that compost is supplementary to his rotational practice and that in itself can be enough to give back to the land a large measure of its lost fertility, to improve quantity and flavour of crops, to restore health to stock and, in so doing, eliminate disease from the land and most ills from mankind.

These things are the guts of the book. It would have been a better book if Mr. Sykes had left it at that. But he has gone beyond his title with chapters on some other aspects of farming, on co-operative marketing, nationalisation of the land, artificial insemination, and so on. His views are as strong on these subjects as they are on humus, but they suffer in presentation because their brevity lacks the fascinating and convincing detail of the main theme. It has been a favourite jeer at the Humus School that they know all the answers, but never offer proof. Mr. Sykes lays himself open to such taunts in one or two chapters, notably that on whole wheat as the perfect food.

Some careful editing would also have improved his matter. There is sometimes an abruptness between paragraphs or chapters which looks like bad linkage of articles used to build up the book. A few stories are repeated, some twice. For the rest, Mr. Sykes writes naturally and well. His sincerity is apparent. No matter to which faith he may cling, every farmer should read the book and the medical profession might do well to dip into it. It should be forced upon the notice of the Ministries of Food and Agriculture.

There is now much inquiry into the state of the soil after six intensive years, now to be extended to a seventh and an eighth. Thousands of farmers are also asking themselves whether the overhead charge for artificials is essential. Others are wondering why pests increase despite expensive control and why the main diseases of farm animals show no sign of reduction whatever the veterinary practice may prescribe.

There is something for all these people in Mr. Sykes's book, something to think about—and deeply. The faults of the book are trivial. It remains the most intelligent and profound book on farming that has appeared for a very long time. For there is something wrong with the land. Nobody in their senses can deny it. If the answer is not in this book, then there is matter that may eventually provide the answer. At this time, when a starving world is crying out for food, those in authority over the land should ask why Mr. Sykes is so successful and be determined to have the answer. The claims of the Humus School have never yet been allowed a fair hearing. It should be given now.

HUGH BROADBRIDGE

AN AMERICAN GENERATION

The World of Washington Irving. By VAN WYCK BROOKS. *Dent.* 15*s.*

The World of Washington Irving is much too narrow a title for Mr. Van Wyck Brooks' latest study in the history of American literature, for this is not only the world of Irving, but of Poe, of Cooper, of Thomas Jefferson, of Daniel Boone, and of the great naturalists, Wilson, Bartram and Audubon—as well as of a host of minor figures, many of them extremely odd and fascinating. There are so many of these minor figures indeed that at first the fear arises that we shall not be able to see the woods for the trees—or, in fact, for the

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bushes and weeds; but as we read on confidence returns, for Mr. Brooks has an astonishingly firm grasp of the threads he is weaving and the pattern is never really lost. And what a world he is describing! So various, so interesting and so new for most of us, with such a sense of space and adventure and endless possibilities.

As a Southerner I was particularly interested in the chapters on the South, and I believe that nothing better has ever been written about it. Mr. Brooks has wisely treated this region as fully as any of the others, since it already possessed a unique and in some ways a highly developed civilisation, and the nature of its tragedy was always plain. Yet with the great exception of Poe—and possibly of Simms the Carolina novelist—it had then produced no writer of importance, and few, in fact, of any kind. And this strange "voicelessness" of the South, as Henry James calls it, was hardly to be broken for nearly a century afterwards. Even in 1820 a taint of decay hung over the Southern States, and Southerners were living in the past and talking of the days "before the war"—only their war was the Revolution of 1776 instead of the Civil War. Was it perhaps never regret for a real past, but what the Portuguese call *Saudad* itself rising like a miasma from the moss-dripping woods.

Mr. Brooks is particularly good on Poe and insists, rightly, I am sure, that Poe is quintessentially a Southern writer. The mode of feeling, the beautiful, dreamy, dreary landscapes, the sense of ruin and decay, all are Southern. And he makes the interesting suggestion that the House of Ussher was not borrowed from the architecture of Gothic romances, as one might suppose, but drawn from a memory of one of those great ruined plantation houses on the South Carolina coast, which I used to see as a child, and which Bartram says he saw in 1773 "settling to the ground and mouldering to earth." He suggests, too, that it is in some old Southern cemetery, under the shrouded live oaks, that the "tomb by the sounding sea" stands.

Mr. Brooks is almost equally good, however, upon the West and the North. It is interesting to find that the influence of American novelists upon Europe begins with Fenimore Cooper. Balzac admired him extremely, and Tolstoy not only admired him, but paraphrased page after page of description from him for *The Cossacks*, and Conrad surprisingly speaks of him as one of the authors who shaped his life. There was a perfect rage for his works on the Continent, so that some of his novels were published simultaneously in thirty-four cities and translated into eighteen languages, including the Persian! He seems to have been a most attractive man, frank, lively and vigorous and very much an old-time sailor.

One of the minor figures of whom Mr. Brooks writes at some length is Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810), an interesting early novelist and a pioneer of the psychological novel, who said that he was "one of those who would rather travel into the mind of a ploughman than into the interior of Africa." His work, in spite of some awkwardness and eighteenth-century stiffness, has some strangely moving imaginative scenes, which, if you have read him when young, as Cooper said, faintly haunt you all your life. He is almost forgotten now; but perhaps it is enough for a writer to have been adored by Shelley and loved by Coleridge and Hawthorne and Keats, and to have had Scott speak of his "wonderful powers." A critical biography of Brown would still, however, be of interest, for he seems to have been one of the earliest anarchists, and besides his novels wrote a Utopia and a number of political pamphlets. But he died young of consumption. That would be the epitaph of so many of the minor writers of this period.

America in those days was the naturalist's Paradise, and the gaunt figure of Alexander Wilson, the Scottish poet and ornithologist, stalks through these pages, while the delightful Audubon appears and disappears and reappears again, riding through state after state in search of new birds. Then there is William Bartram, the botanist, scenes from whose enchanting *Travels* are reflected in *Kubla Khan* and the *Ancient Mariner* and in *Ruth* and *The Prelude*. And what a long history the wild West has as a home of the imagination! Wordsworth and Byron and even Blake wandered there in fancy. And here we return to Thomas Jefferson. For it seems to have been the memories of his early youth on the frontier, persisting through his life as a statesman and a Virginia planter, that gave him his unwavering belief in the natural goodness of men and their ability to govern themselves.

This is not perhaps so much a book of literary criticism as an appreciation through its writings of a time that is past. And Mr. Brooks brings great gifts to his task. But it is his highest merit that in the most bleak and arid places where only the dry words are left he can make these dry words live.

GAMEL WOOLSEY

A DANISH STORYTELLER

Twelve Stories. By STEEN STEENSEN BLICHER. Princetown University Press for the American Scandinavian Foundation. (*Geoffrey Cumberlege.*) 20s.

To the reader familiar with the works of the great French and English novelists of the 18th and 19th centuries an excursion into the Germanic world of that time in search of fiction is not always rewarding. Few Englishmen will put down a book such as Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* with the firm resolve to re-read it as soon as possible. Scandinavian novels, too, owing to their often unwieldy structure and unfamiliar background, have usually proved heavy going for foreign readers. Any prejudice, however, against Danish fiction on similar grounds can hardly be justified; for Danish writers, though practically unknown here, were, at the time of the Romantic Revival, much influenced by the main current of European literary tradition, and their reputation stood high with their own countrymen. Indeed, in the early years of the 19th century, a school of writers and poets grew up in Denmark, whose fame soon crossed its border. Öhlenschläger was perhaps the most famous of them; and, after him Steen Steensen Blicher. A few facts about Blicher will therefore not be out of place.

He was born in 1782 in the parsonage of Vium in Jutland and was the descendant of five generations of clergymen. The position of the clergy in Denmark at that time was far from good; yet, even so, the Church offered a way of escape from the dependence and lack of freedom under which the peasants were forced to live. Blicher therefore became a candidate for orders, and went to Copenhagen to complete his studies and qualify for the ministry. He did not enter it at once, however, but married young and became a teacher, though he had little enthusiasm for such a profession. Having neglected his duties, he was forced to resign, and in due course found himself a minister in his father's parish. But his old habits persisted, and he did little for his parishioners, whilst devoting much of his time to his own pastimes and interests. Soon he began to increase his earnings by contributing to a local paper, at first by retelling tales by foreign authors, and later by writing original poems and stories. His fame grew slowly, but he never prospered. He had a large family, an unfaithful wife, and intemperate habits that led, towards the end of his life, to his removal from the ministry. However, all that is long forgotten, and his stories remain

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amongst the most popular in the Danish language.

That is not surprising. Blicher was neither a good teacher, nor a satisfactory clergyman, but he was a real artist. His love of roaming the countryside with a gun, and of making friends with tinkers, gipsies, beggars and outlaws, all brought grist to his mill as a writer. Moreover, his training for the ministry had given him a sound knowledge of Greek and Latin, and he was an excellent linguist. He was the translator of Ossian, and a great admirer of Scott, with whom he had a good deal in common. Like Scott, he had an intimate knowledge of his own country and a gift for getting on good terms with all and sundry. Both brought a wide culture to their task, and both were most successful when the setting of their stories was that of an age just before their own.

Blicher's material is taken from the life of Jutland. He deals with fundamental themes—love, death, hate and the eternal passing of time. His style is direct and never wordy. He takes care to handle each story in the most effective way, skilfully imparting variety to his material by selecting now one character and now another, to act as spokesman. These characters seem authentic, and his stories never lack suspense.

The twelve chosen for this volume include two of the most famous: "The Journal of a Parish Clerk" and "The Parson at Vejlby." In the former he tells the life story of the Clerk in journal form—a *tour de force*, in the short space of thirty pages. In the latter the Judge at Vejlby finds himself forced to try the parson, who is the father of his future wife, for murder. He condemns him, only to discover, years later, that he was innocent after all. The other tales, some gay and some melodramatic, handle plots often based on fact, that are as convincing as is their setting, the heath and moorland of his native land. It is a strange and narrow world, but one endowed by Blicher with life and credibility, which the adventurous reader may well care to explore.

The translation by Hanna Astrup Larsen is competent. There is a long and informative introduction by Sigrid Undset, which certainly adds to the interest of the book.

GRAHAM RAWSON

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England and the Mediterranean Tradition. Edited by the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes. *Oxford University Press.* £2 2s.

Fragonard—Drawings for Ariosto. *Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner.* £4 4s.

Back numbers of the "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" are not easy to come by, even in that Mecca for bibliophiles, the Charing Cross Road, and students of art history will welcome the republication in a single volume of the Journal's essays dealing with the relation between English culture and the Mediterranean. The authors of this book tactfully remind us, in a period of exaggerated nationalism, that our island culture has always formed part of a European tradition, however much we may boast of the uniqueness of our own contribution. Elizabethan miniatures take on a new significance against a background of international mannerism; Giotto is shown to have affected our book illustrators of the fourteenth century, and even Blake, the so-called isolated visionary, owed much to Italian engravings. Dr. Wittkower, it is true, stresses the Englishness of "Palladian" architecture of the Burlington circle and tries to prove that it had little to do with Palladio, but he studies the whole problem, from the European angle, just as H. F. Clark, writing on landscape gardening, contrasts the English conception of the picturesque with contemporary French Rococo. The fact that many of the contributors to this volume were trained in Germany, and are passionate opponents of National Socialism, accounts for the rigid historical method, the reverence for chronology and the assumption of an all-pervading Mediterranean influence.

The most important contribution made by these writers is their refusal to regard visual art as an isolated phenomenon distinct from other forms of human activity. Very often we tend to draw false conclusions from an analysis of the art of the last hundred years, and to cite the public neglect of Rembrandt and the hot-headedness of Michelangelo as sufficient proof that the artist has always worked in conflict with his age. Every essay in this book takes for granted the association between artist and public and the artist's reliance on certain conventions of iconography. Otto Pächt, for instance, writes of the author of the Egerton Genesis: "Originality is certainly one of the outstanding qualities of his work. But even for the transitional period from the Middle Ages to modern times it is seldom safe to attribute unusual iconographical motives to the artist's personal invention." The change in iconographical motives comes about not as a result of the individual whim of the artist but in the wake of slight social and political changes. In an exceptionally able essay, Edgar Wind demonstrates the political relevance of Verrio's allegorical frescoes on the staircase at Hampton Court; and Charles Mitchell relates Benjamin West's "Death of Wolfe" to the Christian iconography of the "Deposition from the Cross," and shows how a popular subject could, by the time this picture was painted, be treated naturalistically in contemporary costumes. These essays are, in fact, a statement of what is *required* of the artist, and perhaps for this reason the book has to close on the brink of the nineteenth century, before that period of excessive individualism when the only true artists were driven by circumstances in upon themselves.

It is hard to imagine a more agreeable book to possess than the volume of reproductions of Fragonard's drawings for Ariosto's "Orlando furioso"; 137 drawings are reproduced for the first time as a complete series, about two-thirds their actual size. Evidently Fragonard intended them originally for illustrations to a published text, but he never completed the series; he made comparatively few drawings for the later cantos, and would no doubt have scrapped some drawings for the earlier cantos which are little more than rough notes for a visual rendering of Ariosto's theme. However, the editors were fully justified in reproducing every pencil-stroke made by Fragonard, with its accompanying text wherever the subject could be identified. The "Orlando furioso" tells a magical and fantastic story of beautiful women being rescued by knights in armour, of impossible combats, tournaments and massacres that are as easily translatable into Rococo terms as Shakespeare into German or *Justine* into surrealism. Fragonard sticks closely to the details of Ariosto's descriptions, and the editors of this volume were right to stress the spiritual affinity between these two charming artists. But a more interesting approach might have been an analysis of their differences. The pictorial counterpart of Ariosto is to be found in the Giorgionesque fantasy of Dosso Dossi, who worked in the same town of Ferrara at the same moment. The elegant Rococo of Fragonard would have struck Ariosto either as incomprehensible or as a monstrous travesty of the facts of his poem. This is of course no criticism of Fragonard, who was at liberty to interpret Ariosto

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